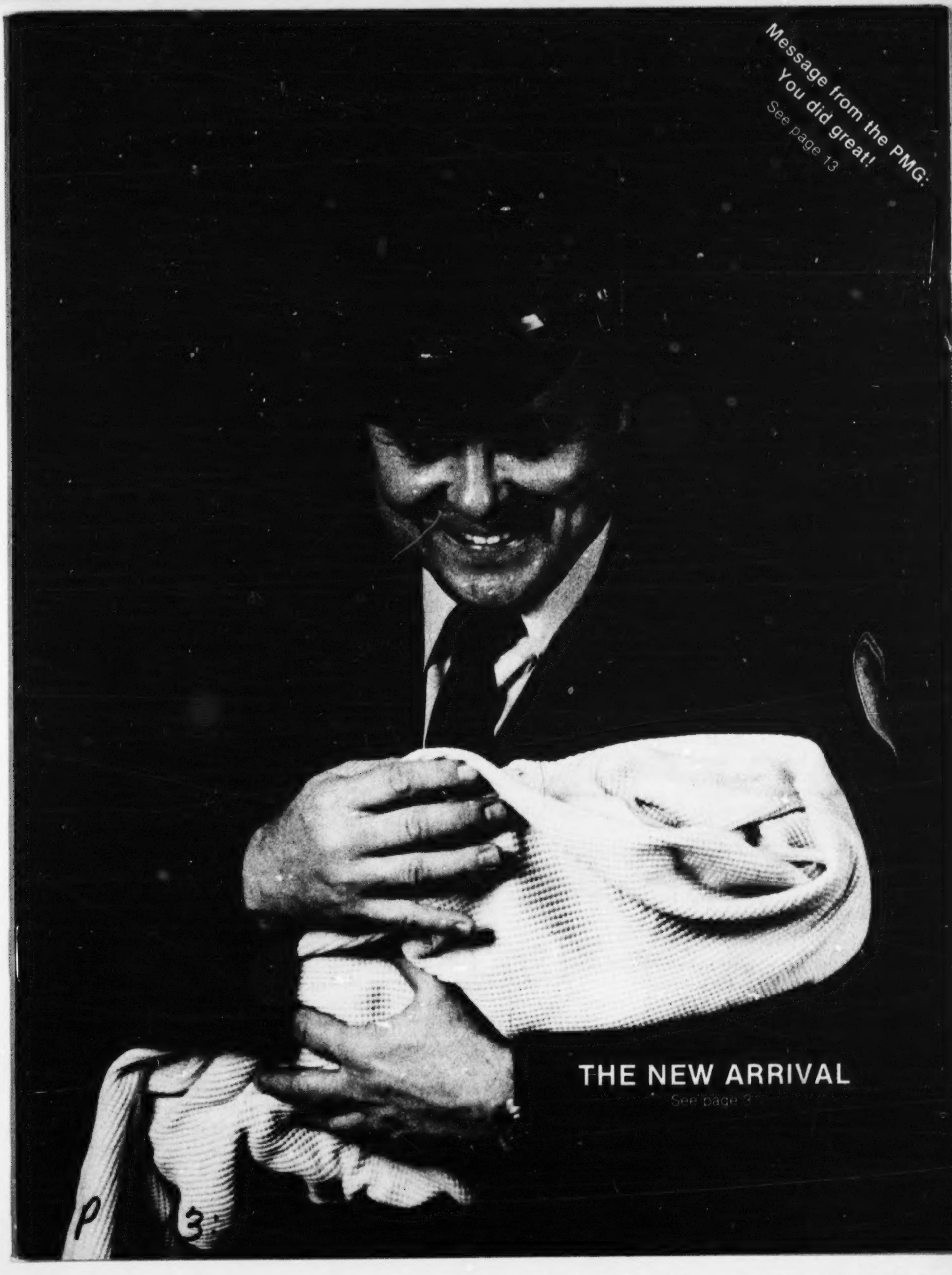


Message from the PMG:
You did great!
See page 13

THE NEW ARRIVAL

See page 3

P 3.

KEEPING POSTED

An appeals court has declared that letter carriers are on sound legal ground when they use shortcuts to deliver the mail. The decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, issued in San Francisco Nov. 16, concerned an ordinance designed to keep carriers off the grass in Pittsburg, CA. In a unanimous ruling, the three-judge panel found that the law was unconstitutional because it interfered "with postal carriers' federal duty to deliver the mail efficiently..." The court endorsed a USPS requirement that carriers use shortcuts when there are no safety hazards or objections from homeowners, declaring: "The regulation's purpose and effect is consonant with the Congressional mandate to the Postal Service to provide efficient mail service." While the law was in effect, sticking to the sidewalks in Pittsburg had added from 45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours to affected routes, according to Postmaster James A. Billet. It's estimated that a nationwide ban on crossing lawns would increase the cost of delivering mail by well over $100 million a year.

January was National Blood Donor Month, and postal employees have achieved enviable marks in helping to meet the need for this life-giving fluid. For example, in Los Angeles, Lorenzo David Flores, who works at the Worldway Postal Center, has donated 63 pints since 1950. His total, while not a record, underscores the involvement of postal workers. The American Red Cross reminds us that "blood is like a parachute — if it's not there when you need it, chances are you'll never need it again." Furthermore, it says that blood donors are some of the fittest people in town.

Profits from selling a system for winning at the racetrack seemed like a sure bet to Jimmy Wolbach — until he ran into a customer from the Postal Inspection Service. Now he's facing charges of fraud. In his ads, the promoter had promised — "as true as my name is Jimmy Wolbach" — that his system would produce minimum winnings of $250 a day. But when an inspector from the Consumer Protection Program put Jimmy's "Famous 500-Point Handicap" to the test, he averaged a $50-a-day loss. On investigation he also found that the promoter is known to his parents as Issac Oberndorfer.

Mailers got two early Christmas presents Dec. 6 when the Postal Service began allowing First-Class Mail to hitchhike on other mail and extended forwarding for Express Mail.

Thanks to the "incidental mail" ruling, your Aunt Minnie may now slip a personal letter into a parcel and mailers may attach First-Class matter such as statements to publications or merchandise sent by second-, third- and fourth-class mail and not pay the First-Class postage. (Merchandise samples sent third-class are excluded.)

The extension of free Express Mail forwarding means that the receiving post offices, which previously provided the service on a local basis, will now try to track down addressees who have left town. However, there will be no refund of postage if the forwarding causes the item to miss the promised delivery time.

To help LSM operators get used to seeing more ZIP + 4 mail, the Postal Service has designed a one-hour program to familiarize keyers with the longer codes. The training sessions will begin in February, according to Julian March, senior employee development specialist at the USPS Management Academy in Potomac, MD.

While no testing or grading will be involved, the on-the-clock programs will provide an opportunity for LSM operators to ask questions about ZIP + 4 and key dummy mail carrying a mixture of five-digit and expanded codes.

Operators will continue to key all mail according to the five-digit code.

A new version of the No.3 sack began arriving on postal docks before the holidays, and a new No.2 sack is on its way. Made of woven plastic, the sacks cost about $.35 each, compared to the $5-each price of their canvas counterparts. Approximately 1.5 million of them went into circulation in December with good results, according to initial reports from post offices and from the third-class mailers who used them. Tests of a version of the sack designed for second-class mail are due to start in March. In May, International Exchange Offices are scheduled to get a disposable version of the plastic sacks for surface second- and third-class mail leaving the country. After they are emptied, the plastic sacks used domestically will be returned to mail depositories for reuse.

THE NEW ARRIVAL

Say hello to Electronic Computer-Originated Mail service, the newest member of the USPS's 206-year-old family of services — and a First-Class addition.

Born January 4, E-COM is the offspring of a unique partnership between the USPS and private sector telecommunications companies.

During its first five weeks, the fledgling service operated like a postal veteran, speeding 27,692 customer messages to the 25 serving post offices that are the backbone of the E-COM delivery system.

The E-COM equipment in these facilities — strategically located around the country — accepts computer-originated transmissions and translates them into printed messages. The messages are automatically folded and inserted into envelopes, then join the mailstream for delivery as First-Class Mail within two days.

More than 230 mailers have already applied for technical certification to use this faster, more efficient method of handling computer-generated mail, including Merrill Lynch, Hallmark Cards, the AFL-CIO, and Equitable Life Assurance Company of New York.

The USPS fee for the service — 26 cents for one page or 31 cents for two — includes postage, paper, the envelope, and the labor for preparing the message for delivery. The customer pays an additional fee to the private telecommunications carrier for transmitting the messages to the appropriate serving post office.■

LETTER CARRIER
E·COM

the PONY EXPRESS

PONY EXPRESS
SAN FRANCISCO

Its life span was only 18 months. It lost money for the major company that operated it. It was expensive. And at its peak, riders carried only 41 letters per trip to California. It was the Pony Express, which, nevertheless, has come to represent the most colorful era in postal history.

Americans' interest in the Pony Express results perhaps from their infatuation with the "Wild West" phase of our national development. Or it may be that a small, lean man astride a sturdy horse, testing the hostile elements, reminds us of the classic struggle between man and nature. In any event, the Pony Express, although short-lived, will always remain a prime example of postal heroics.

The Pony Express was really nothing new. Its method of operation was as old as the Persian postal system in 500 B.C. It was also not without precedent in the United States.

In 1836, a special express service was inaugurated providing round-the-clock schedules between New York; Philadelphia; Mobile, AL; and New Orleans. This express used railroads and steamboat lines as well as horseback riders.

The primary purpose of this service was to carry news of price fluctuations, especially for the cotton market, news clippings, government dispatches and private letters.

The operation lasted three years and has been dubbed the "Eastern Pony Express" by historians.

continued

There were early advocates of a Pony Express between the East and the West, as the nation continued its "manifest destiny" to the Pacific Ocean. War clouds were on the horizon as controversy between the "free" and the "slave" states was aggravated. As new states were accepted into the Union, compromises were sought, with the existing slave and free states trying to maintain a balance of power, so that one group did not outnumber the other.

One of the big prizes in this free vs. slave contest was California, and the "free-staters" perceived that one of the major ways to keep this state in the free column was by keeping it in touch with the national capital. The telegraph network was being extended to the Pacific Coast, but it was still a number of years away from completion, and there had to be a temporary, fast way to communicate.

Mail was the answer, but in the mid-19th Century it took 22 days to send letters via Panama from New York to San Francisco.

In January 1855, Senator William M. Gwin of California introduced a bill in Congress to set up a weekly letter express between St. Louis and San Francisco, but the legislation was not enacted.

Finally, an independent company, the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Co., in hopes of getting a substantial mail contract from the government, started service over a Northern route, covering 1,950 miles, between St. Joseph, MO, and Sacramento, CA. Initial rides were made in both directions on April 3, 1860.

The average ride was fixed at 10 days and later reduced to eight. The quickest trip took seven days and 17 hours, and the text of President Lincoln's inaugural address was carried on that famous ride. The cost of sending a letter was $5 per half ounce, later reduced to $1.

At one time or another during its 18-month life span, the Pony Express involved 119 relay stations, 90 riders and 500 horses. Riders were paid $100 to $125 a month for the hazardous bi-weekly trips which took them through hostile Indian country as well as treacherous deserts and over dangerous mountains. Only one rider was killed outright while on duty, but a few were mortally wounded.

Division agents were located every 200 miles. Their job was to provide for emergencies, such as Indian raids and stampeding of animal stock, as well as to exercise general supervision over the service.

At first, relief stations, where fresh horses and riders quartered, were situated 25 miles apart and a rider covered three stations or 75 miles a day. Later, the distance between the stations was regulated by the character of the terrain, so that some stations were actually only 10 miles apart.

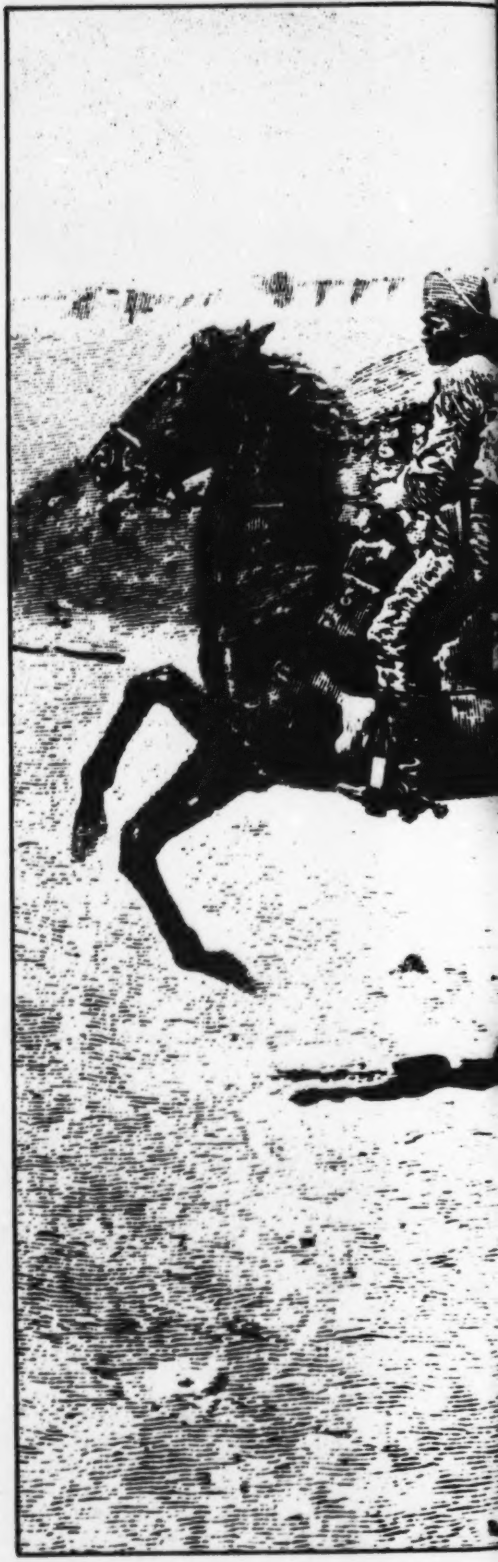
Two minutes was the maximum time allowed at stations, whether it was to change horses or riders.

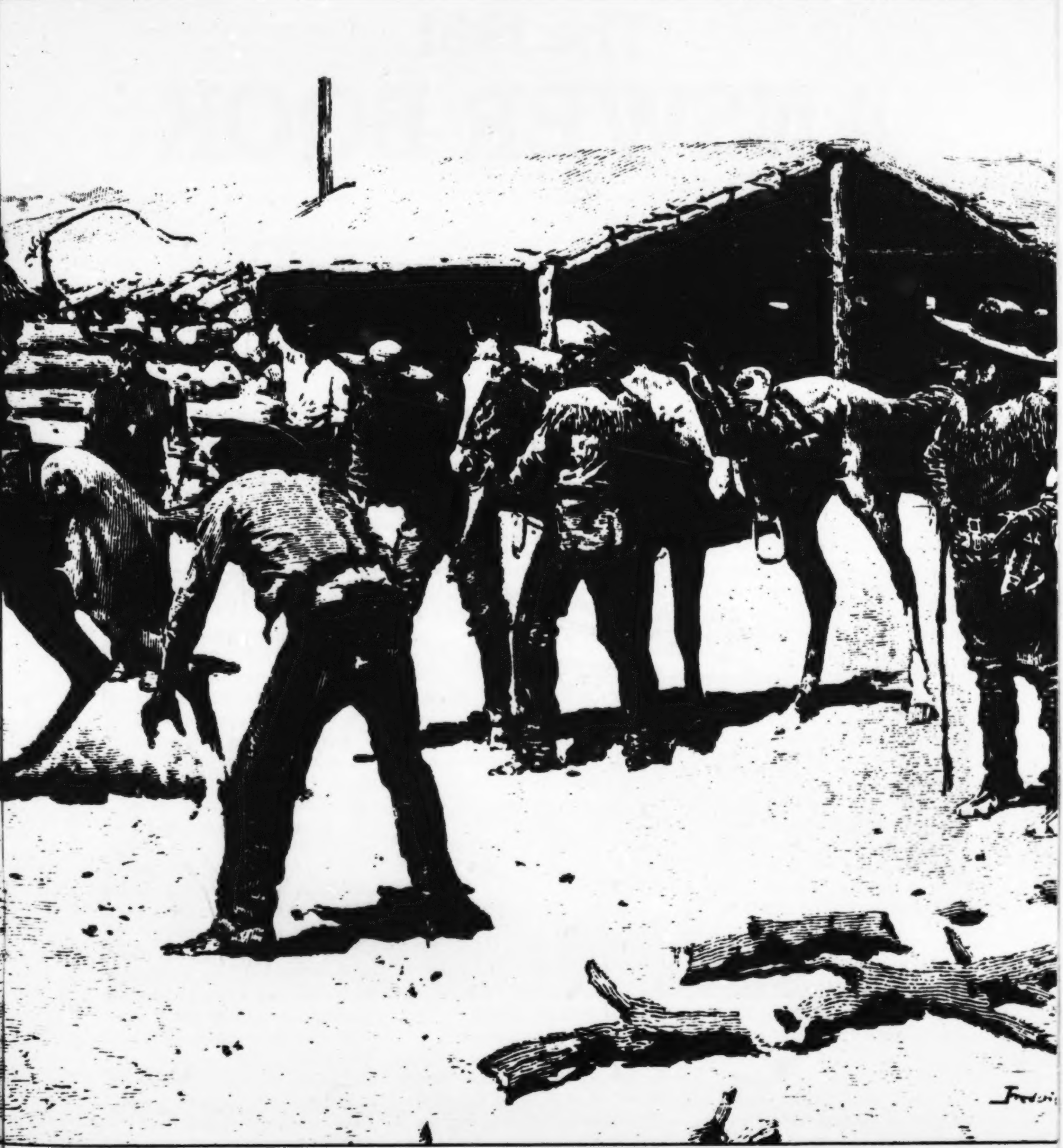
During the months the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Co. operated the service, its expenses were $700,000. They broke down as follows:

Equipping the line	$100,000
Maintenance @ $30,000 a month	$480,000
Nevada Indian War	$ 75,000
Miscellaneous	$ 45,000

Receipts, however, were not over $500,000, so the company lost $200,000. The Federal Government did not extend any financial aid, and in August 1861, Central Overland had to pull out of the Pony Express business.

The service was continued for a short period by other firms under contract to the Post Office Department, until the line of the Pacific Telegraph Co. was completed in October 1861. ■





The 1981 ANSWER BOOK

Facts and figures from the Annual Report put what we did last year in perspective

It's well recognized that ours is the one government agency that touches almost every American almost every day. But few people stop to consider what this fact implies about our size.

Few realize, for example, that if the Postal Service were a private company we'd be near the top of the list of Fortune 500 companies...that, in terms of sales, we would rank in the top 15 industrials — below Exxon and General Motors, but ahead of such industry leaders as ITT, Du Pont, Eastman-Kodak, and U.S. Steel...that we would be the third largest employer in the nation, behind only AT&T and General Motors...and that our 39,000 post offices, stations, branches, contract and community post offices make up the largest "retail chain" of any U.S. company ...from which we sold some $19 billion in postage and services last year.

The sheer magnitude of our operations is highlighted every year in our annual report — which is the "big picture" of a giant organization. But the Annual Report of the Postmaster General presents another kind of image as well. It is also a group picture of many individuals and what they can do working together in a single year.

We're all there in this picture of 1981, and as you can see for yourself in the summary of the annual report on the following pages, we're looking pretty good.

1981 was a year of challenge, action and achievement.

It was a year in which:

- The Postal Service once again negotiated contracts with three major unions and several smaller unions. We again reached agreements that are fair both to employees and to the public we serve, and once again we did so peacefully, without disruptions in service.
- For the third straight year, we provided overnight service for 95% of the stamped First-Class Mail targeted for local or metropolitan area delivery. Although we fell short of our goals for second- and third-day delivery, we delivered *all* First-Class Mail (61 billion pieces) in an average of 1.68 days and stamped First-Class in 1.51 days.
- We continued the major effort begun in 1980 to improve our health and safety program and saw the results in a much better record: Accidents per 100 employees dropped 6.3% in 1981, our illness and injury rate fell 7.5%, and our lost workday injury rate was down 12.7%.
- We took new steps to make certain that all employees receive fair and equal opportunity.
- We completed preparations for the successful launching of Electronic Computer Originated Mail (E-COM), and we saw another year of outstanding growth for our veteran premium service, Express Mail. Its volume rose 36% to 23.8 million pieces and revenue climbed 46% to $269.7 million.
- The amount of taxpayers' money that went into our operations declined still more so that in 1981 the Public Service Appropriation represented only 2% of our total operating expense. (The year before Reorganization, taxpayers carried the burden for 24% of the operating costs. Congress would have had to appropriate more than $5 billion to provide an equivalent

subsidy for 1981.)

- Customers again endorsed our service as a good value by buying more postage and services — $19 billion worth in all. They deposited a record 110 billion pieces of mail, an increase of 3.8 billion pieces, and we again used the opportunity presented by a volume hike to improve productivity.
- Volume of second- and fourth-class mail declined by 264 million pieces and 43 million pieces, respectively. But the volume of First- and third-class mail rose 1.1 *billion* pieces and 3.2 *billion* pieces, respectively.
- We increased gross productivity — which is the total volume divided by the number of work years — by 3.4%, for a cumulative productivity increase of 38.4% since 1970.

It was, by and large, a performance we can take pride in.

In fact, our major disappointments stemmed from factors largely outside our control: The delay in implementing the 20-cent rate and its negative effect on our finances, and Congress's decision to postpone our introduction of ZIP+4 until October 1, 1983.

POSTAL RATES

Entering the year we had expected that the rate increase we sought — the first in nearly three years — would put us within a hair's breadth of balancing our costs and revenues. But instead of ending 1981 with the net loss of $2.9 million we had projected, we closed the books with a deficit of $588 million.

The difference reflects the Postal Rate Commission's decision last February to recommend an 18-cent rate instead of the 20-cent rate we had requested in April 1980. That recommendation would leave the

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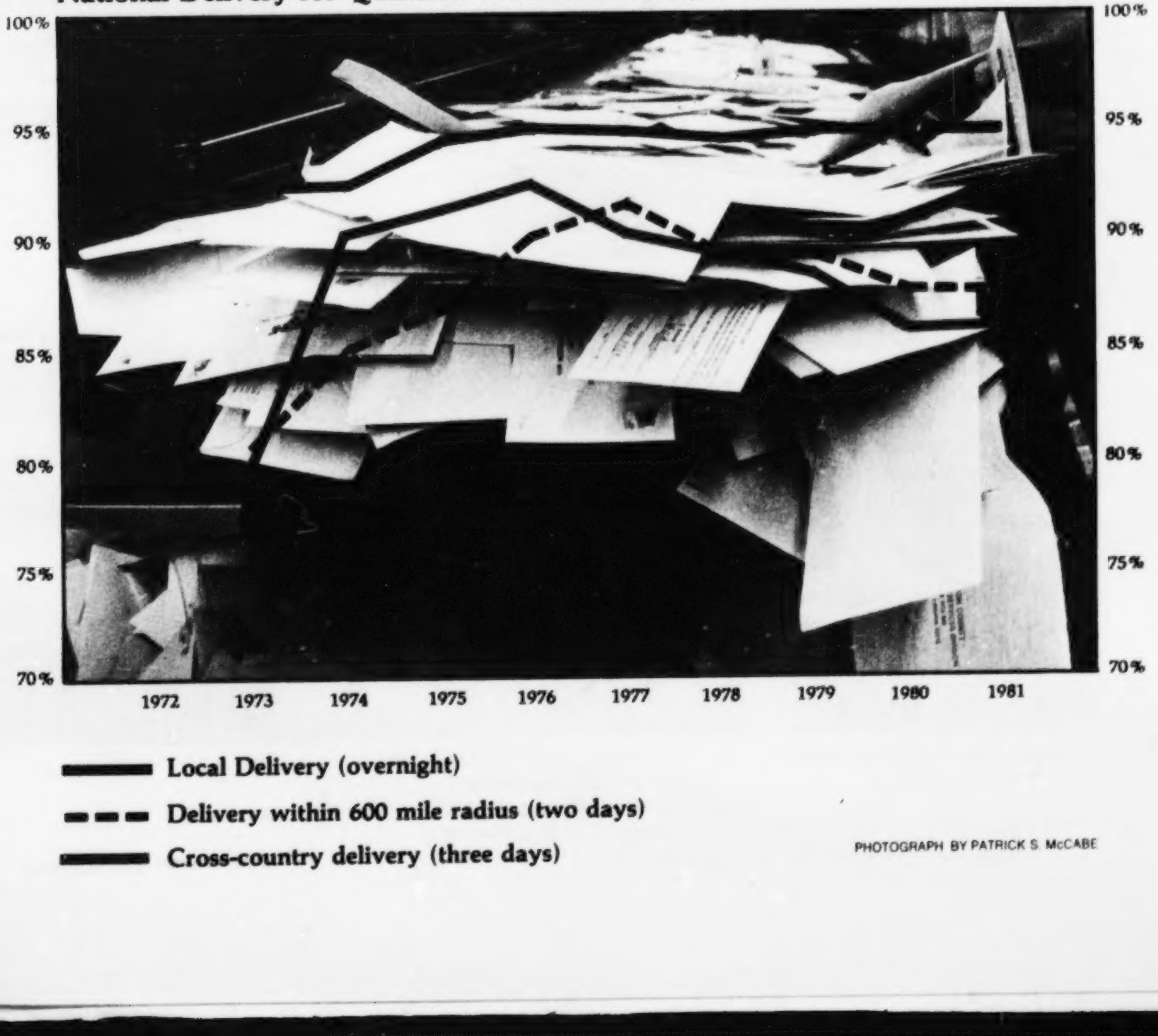
National Delivery for Qualified First-Classs Mail, 1972-1981



PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK S. McCABE

Postal Service $1 billion short on its total revenue needs.

In March, acting under protest, the Postal Service Governors put the 18-cent rate into effect, and in November they modified a further recommendation of the PRC and implemented the 20-cent stamp.

With the 20-cent rate in place, the Postmaster General has stated that we will hold the line on rates for at least two years.

PRODUCTIVITY

Looking further ahead, however, the opportunity for increased productivity — and holding the line on future postage hikes — received a setback when Congress voted to delay implementation of ZIP+4.

Since personnel compensation is 84% of our total costs, there is a direct connection between our level of productivity and the fact that Americans enjoy the lowest postage rates in the industrialized free world. The chart on these pages tells the story best: Since the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act in 1970, fewer and better-paid employees have been working with better equipment and methods to do a more efficient job of moving the mail.

The dramatic productivity record of the last decade can be attributed to our extremely effective use of our two most important tools: the mechanization program we embarked upon at the time of Reorganization and the presort options we began to introduce in fiscal 1976.

That's why we could handle an additional 3.8 billion pieces of mail in 1981 with only a 0.5% increase in our workforce. (Actually, most of the increase in our workforce was due to a rise in rural carrier substitutes of 2,326, who are not full time employees).

AUTOMATION

We know that we are nearing the end of the gains to be made from mechanization. That's why automation, and making the best use of it through our ZIP+4 program, is so vital to handling future volume increases.

At present, 1,850 pieces of mail can be sorted per work hour mechanically and an average 800 pieces by hand. With the various kinds of automated equipment the Postal Service will deploy, productivity will range from 4,000 to 10,000 pieces per work hour, depending on the operation to be performed.

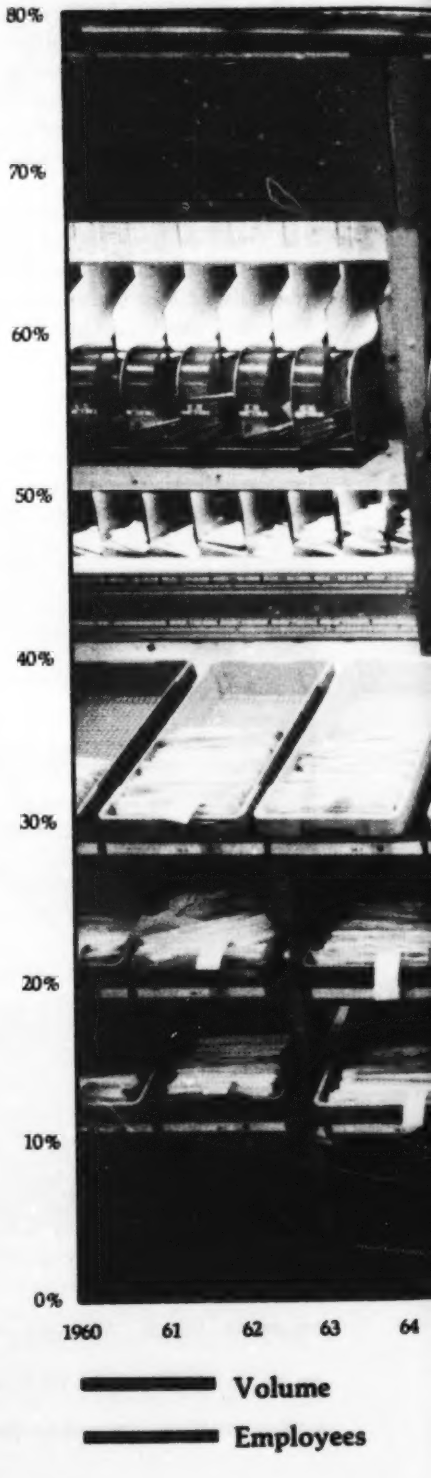
The savings from automation will, however, vary dramatically with the use of the ZIP Code add-on. With our present mechanization, it costs $25 to sort a thousand pieces of five-digit mail. Automated equipment reduces this cost to $22. But when the automated equipment is used to sort ZIP+4 coded mail, the cost drops to $17 per thousand. These reduced costs will be passed along to our customers in the form of less frequent or smaller rate increases in the future.

For employees, automation will mean that once again we will have a better tool with which to handle more mail more efficiently — helping to insure the basic health of the Postal Service.

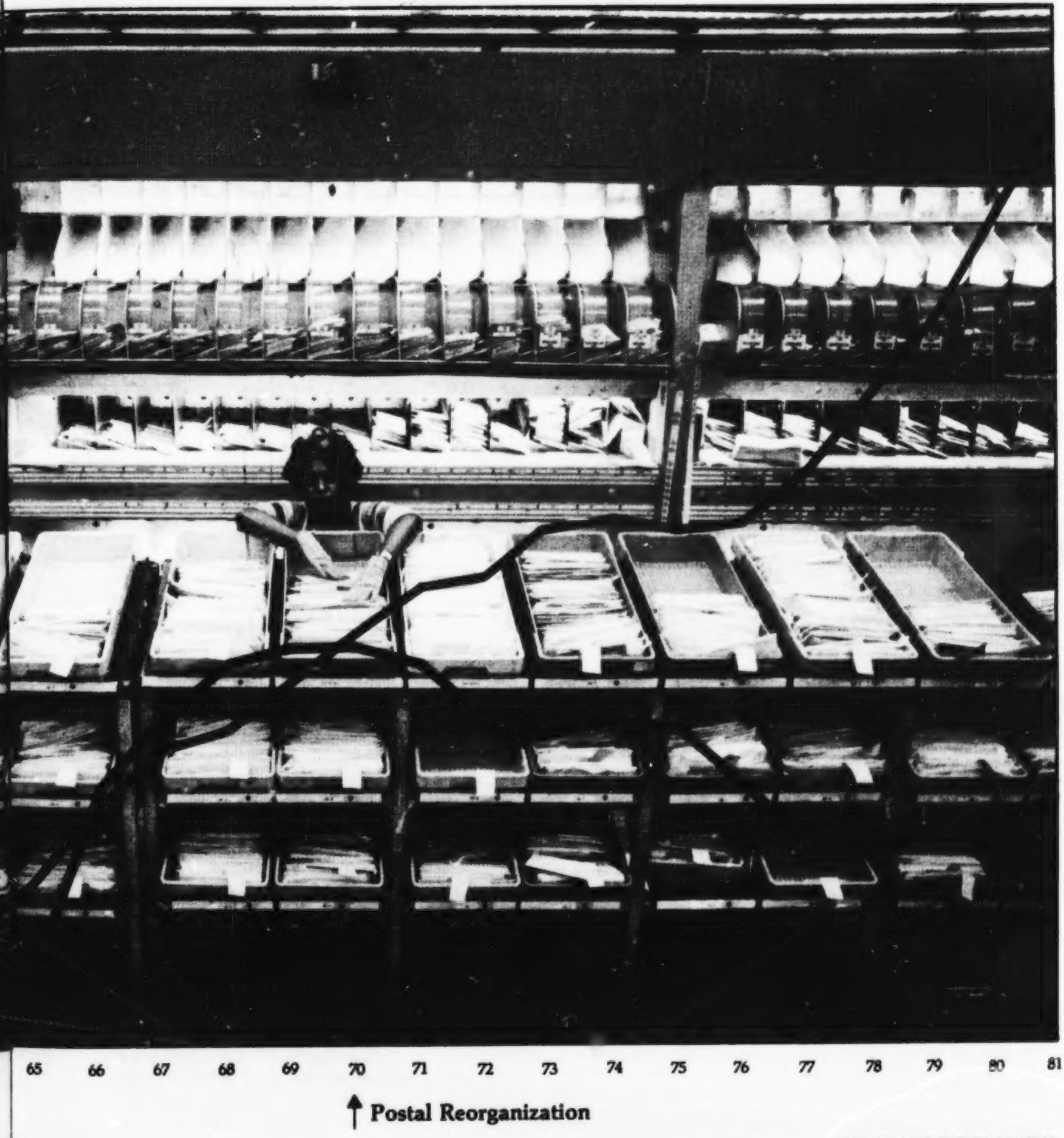
Looking back on the year, despite the problems we encountered, fiscal year 1981 can be seen as another link in the chain of progress that began with Postal Reorganization in 1971. A comparison of the Postal Service's performance in the last 10 years with the performance of the old Post Office Department in its final decade affirms the foresight of the framers of the Postal Reorganization Act. They did a great service for this country.

Today, we can look forward with confidence to even greater achievements in 1982 and ensuing years. ■

Volume and Work Force



Trends, 1960-1981 (shown as a percentage of change since 1960)



PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK S. McCABE

FINANCIAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Statement of Operations	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977
			(dollars in thousands)		
Operating revenues	$19,133,041	$17,142,760	$16,106,085	$14,133,056	$12,997,873
Public service appropriation*	486,000	828,000	920,000	920,000	920,000
Revenue forgone appropriation*	789,108	782,155	799,544	801,510	792,066
Total income	20,408,149	18,752,915	17,825,629	15,854,566	14,709,939
Salaries and benefits	18,017,766	16,541,098	15,162,096	14,031,254	13,124,065
Other expenses	3,351,373	2,871,489	2,367,207	2,188,365	2,186,104
Total operating expenses	21,369,139	19,412,587	17,529,303	16,219,619	15,310,169
Operating income (loss)	(960,990)	(659,672)	296,326	(365,053)	(600,230)
Other income (expense), net	373,251	353,280	173,510	(14,375)	(87,619)
Net income (loss)	($587,739)	($306,392)	$469,836	($379,428)	($687,849)

FINANCIAL AND OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977
Pieces of mail (millions)	110,130	106,311	99,829	96,913	92,224
Percent change	3.6	6.5	3.0	5.1	2.7
U.S. population January 1 (millions)	228.8	221.7	219.5	217.7	216.0
Percent change	3.2	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.7
Pieces of mail per capita	481	480	455	445	427
Percent change	0.4	5.5	2.2	4.2	2.2
Pieces of mail per work year	161,879	156,528	148,322	146,404	138,124
Percent change	3.4	5.5	1.3	6.0	5.2
Work years	680,327	679,184	673,057	661,958	667,688
Percent change	0.2	0.9	1.7	-0.9	-2.3
Employees	670,239	666,823	663,067	655,567	655,097
Percent change	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.1	-1.3

OFFICES, STATIONS AND BRANCHES

	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977
Number of post offices	30,242	30,326	30,449	30,518	30,521
Number of branches and stations					
Classified branches and stations	4,109	4,109	4,104	4,091	4,076
Contract branches and stations	3,421	3,346	3,415	3,438	3,798
Community post offices	1,685	1,705	1,765	1,823	1,927
Total	9,215	9,160	9,284	9,352	9,801
Grand total	39,457	39,486	39,733	39,870	40,322

PIECES OF MAIL

Mail Classification (in billions)	1981	1980	Percent Change
First-Class	61.41	60.28	1.9
Second-Class	9.96	10.22	-2.5
Third-Class	33.61	30.38	10.6
Fourth-Class	0.59	0.63	-6.3
Penalty and franked	3.30	3.50	-5.9
International	0.89	0.96	-7.3
All other	0.37	0.34	8.8
Total mail	110.13	106.31	3.6

Postal Service Dollar

Where It Goes	Cents
Personnel compensation	70.92
Personnel benefits	12.94
Travel of persons	.37
Transportation	8.43
Rents, communications, and utilities	2.44
Printing	.20
Other services	1.12
Supplies and materials	1.78
Insurance claims and indemnities	.17
Interest on notes and bonds	.54
Subtotal	98.91
Depreciation and write-offs	1.09
Total	$1.00

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*The public service appropriation is authorized by the Postal Reorganization Act "for public service costs incurred by (the Postal Service) in providing a maximum degree of effective and regular postal service nationwide." In addition, the Act authorizes the revenue forgone appropriation--a sum determined by the Postal Service to be equal to revenue forgone by it in providing certain mail services at free or reduced rates.

YOU DID GREAT!

The PMG says First Quarter results show four-star performance

To All Employees:

The results are in on our performance in the first quarter of the fiscal year, and the results are so gratifying I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for a job extremely well done.

The first quarter (Oct. 1 through Dec. 25) encompasses our most demanding time of the year. This year, the period also included a rate change and a significant reduction in scheduled airline flights compared to 1980. Yet, in the face of these challenges, we combined forces to produce what may well have been the best postal Christmas ever — and a first quarter that gives us a running headstart on good performance for the entire fiscal year.

The facts tell the story:

- Overnight delivery performance for stamped First-Class Mail destined for local delivery was up 2% over the same period last year to 95%.
- Second-day delivery performance — for outbound mail going 600 miles or less — rose 4%, to 86%.
- Third-day performance — for outbound mail going over 600 miles — also improved 4% to 88%.
- And, throughout the country, there was not a single report of a major Christmas service slip as we handled more mail (1.4% more) than we did during Christmas, 1980.

But the facts don't end there, for we accomplished this service record with:

- A reduction in work hours that was not only below the same period last year but also below our planned performance.
- A reduction in overtime of 10.4% for the first quarter compared to 1980.
- And with 2,900 fewer casuals than last year (16,800 in 1981, compared to 19,700 in 1980).

All these efforts added up to a 4.4% productivity increase for the quarter and a healthy financial posture. We ended the quarter with a $255 million operating surplus, and preliminary results for Accounting Period 4 indicate another $85 million may be added to that total.

A large part of our productivity advance stemmed from the continued growth of presort mail. But of at least equal significance is the fact that we are managing work hours against the demands of our workload more skillfully than we ever have before. We have learned to plan better for such changes as the airline reductions. And our growing confidence has helped make Christmas a predictably busy time, rather than a time for panic.

Although these results were presented to the Governors of the Postal Service at their public meeting on Feb. 9, the media did not report this good news. That's a shame, because the public should be aware of how well *you* have done.

Recognition of the quality of your performance has, however, come from another important source.

Army Brig. Gen. Donald J. Delandro, who is Executive Director of the Military Postal Service Agency, wrote me recently following a tour of major military bases in Europe for the purpose of assessing the Christmas mail program.

"The overall assessment," he said, "was that this was one of the best Christmas mail seasons ever." He added: "Speaking on behalf of the million members of the Armed Forces, their dependents, and other authorized users of the Military Postal Service, I want to extend our appreciation for the outstanding dedication and hard work of your postal people."

I second this praise and again congratulate you for your four-star performance.

Naturally, we cannot relax. We must continue our good work, providing both the good service and the efficiency that was envisioned by the Postal Reorganization Act. But I could not let this occasion pass without noting our most recent sign of progress.

Sincerely,

WFBolger

William F. Bolger

NEITHER SNOW NOR...

Despite some of the worst weather of the 20th century the mail gets through

Some weather experts described it as the worst winter of the century and others settled for calling it the worst since the Great Depression. Either way, the wind, snow and icy cold in the first month of the New Year severely tested the Postal Service's tradition of letting nothing stand in the way of the mails.

Weather reports from parts of the Midwest sounded like they could be coming from the North Pole. Wisconsin was especially hard hit, with temperatures of 40 degrees below zero that felt like 80 or 90 below because of the wind. The Milwaukee Post Office closed for the first time in 35 years January 4 as city transportation systems simply shut down. Nevertheless, 200 postal employees walked to work and E-COM service was inaugurated without a hitch as scheduled that very day.

In Fargo, ND, temperature readings were 10 to 15 below — 60 below taking the wind chill factor into account. Schools, banks and shopping centers closed, but post offices remained open and carriers continued to deliver the mail.

In Washington, DC, nonessential government employees were told not to report to work in the face of subzero temperatures, accumulations of up to 10 inches of snow, and subway and highway systems paralyzed by tragic ac-

Right: Temperatures dipped to 25 degrees below zero in Oshkosh, WI, but carrier Chris Keefe continued on his rounds. *(Photo courtesy the Oshkosh Northwestern).*

cidents that had claimed 76 lives, including one postal employee and the family of another. But nine out of ten postal employees made it to their posts and the mail was delivered to the federal agencies shut down by the weather.

To the north, more than 14 inches of snow blanketed Long Island, NY, and threatened to halt mail delivery. Postal officials, in a special radio appeal, asked residents whose mailboxes were blocked by snow drifts to set up temporary drops near the road. Out came household baskets and all manner of makeshift devices, enabling the mail to get where it was going with only minor delays.

In Burlington, VT, temperatures hovered around the zero mark for three weeks running, winds gusted to 40 miles per hour, and more than 80 inches of snow fell. But, postal workers both kept the mail moving and maintained their exemplary safety record.

Perhaps the most severe test of the Postal Service's mettle came in the Sun Belt. By northern and midwestern standards, the snowfalls weren't too bad—three to six inches. But in places where virtually everyone gets around by car and there is little or no snow removal equipment, it was more than enough to shut down most businesses.

Still, it was a different story on the postal front: Houston, TX, reported no significant mail delays; Birmingham, AL, post offices were kept open by employees who voluntarily gave up scheduled vacations and stayed the night; and in Columbia, SC, the only federal installations that remained open were post offices and a Veterans Administration hospital.

In Atlanta, GA, where snow and freezing rain stranded 100,000 drivers on highways, three-quarters of the city's letter carriers nonetheless reported for duty. And a postal energy coordinator found more pressing business on the streets than behind his desk: he used his four-wheel drive vehicle to rescue marooned motorists from the same elements his carrier co-workers were braving to meet their appointed rounds. ■

Above: Michigan mailbox serves as snowman support *(Photo by Jim Galbraith, courtesy of the Brighton Argus.)* Below: Postal van ploughs through snowy New York City streets. *(Photo courtesy Public Information Office, New York City Post Office.)*

Left: Carrier Gregory Ford watches his step as he descends icy stairs of Capitol Hill residence in Washington, DC. *(Photo by Patrick S. McCabe.)*

MAYDAY

(Mike Stewart of The Press-Enterprise Newspapers Inc., Bloomsburg-Berwick, PA, wrote the following story about Postmaster Allen Klicher's daring rescue of a lost young pilot. It is reprinted with permission.)

It was a young woman's faint, panicked cries heard over his airplane's radio that drew Al Klicher's attention.

It was about 4 p.m. Monday. Somewhere over central Pennsylvania, a student pilot from Virginia was lost, her instruments failing, her fuel supply dwindling.

Hearing her call for help, Klicher—determined to avoid an air tragedy like the one that had claimed his son—began a desperate 90-minute search to locate the girl and lead her to a safe landing.

When 17-year-old Kathy Barker's cries came over the radio, Klicher and a state Bureau of Forestry official were surveying the damage done by an extensive forest fire near Numidia (PA).

"She was really shook up," related the 56-year-old Klicher. "She was completely lost."

Early Monday afternoon, the teen-ager had taken off from her home town of Leesburg, VA, planning to fly solo to Charlottesville (VA), a flight that normally takes about three quarters of an hour.

A student pilot, Kathy made her first flight last September (1980) and had logged some 37 hours of flight time since then in her quest for a pilot's license. The flight Monday was her second cross-country solo flight.

Soon after takeoff, she encountered a rainstorm. To avoid the storm, she piloted her Cessna 150 along a highway that she thought would take her to Charlottesville. It didn't.

She flew on, hoping to find her way, but failed. Some three hours later she was lost and nearly hysterical, crying for help.

For Klicher, the girl's cries were a vivid reminder of other dangers at high altitude. Four years ago his son, Guy, then 24, died along with three others in an airplane crash. The young pilot took off from Harrisburg (PA) and crashed halfway to Shamokin (PA).

"That made me all the more determined to find Kathy," Klicher, the postmaster in Aristes (PA) for the past 10 years, said. . . .

Klicher was flying with Jeff Achy, a fire inspector responsible for Columbia, Montour and Northumberland counties (PA). They had their radio set to 122.8, a frequency used by air traffic in and around smaller airports.

When he heard her cries, Klicher said, the first thing he did was tell the girl to switch from busy 122.8 to 121.5, an emergency frequency. On the latter setting, she could more easily find help.

But his first efforts to reach the girl failed.

"She kept saying, 'I can't copy. I can't understand. Won't somebody please come find me?'

"I kept telling her, 'Switch to 121.5. Switch to 121.5,' " Klicher said. Finally, Kathy responded. And as the minutes passed her voice became clearer and louder.

"She could copy me well. I knew she was close to me," the pilot said.

But Kathy's plane's instruments were failing. For some reason her battery was being drained. And she was worried about her fuel supply.

Her Cessna 150 has a fuel tank on each wing. Fuel is drawn by the motor from each tank simultaneously. One of the tanks showed empty on Kathy's gauges. The other was nearly empty.

While Klicher talked, Kathy broke down in tears several times.

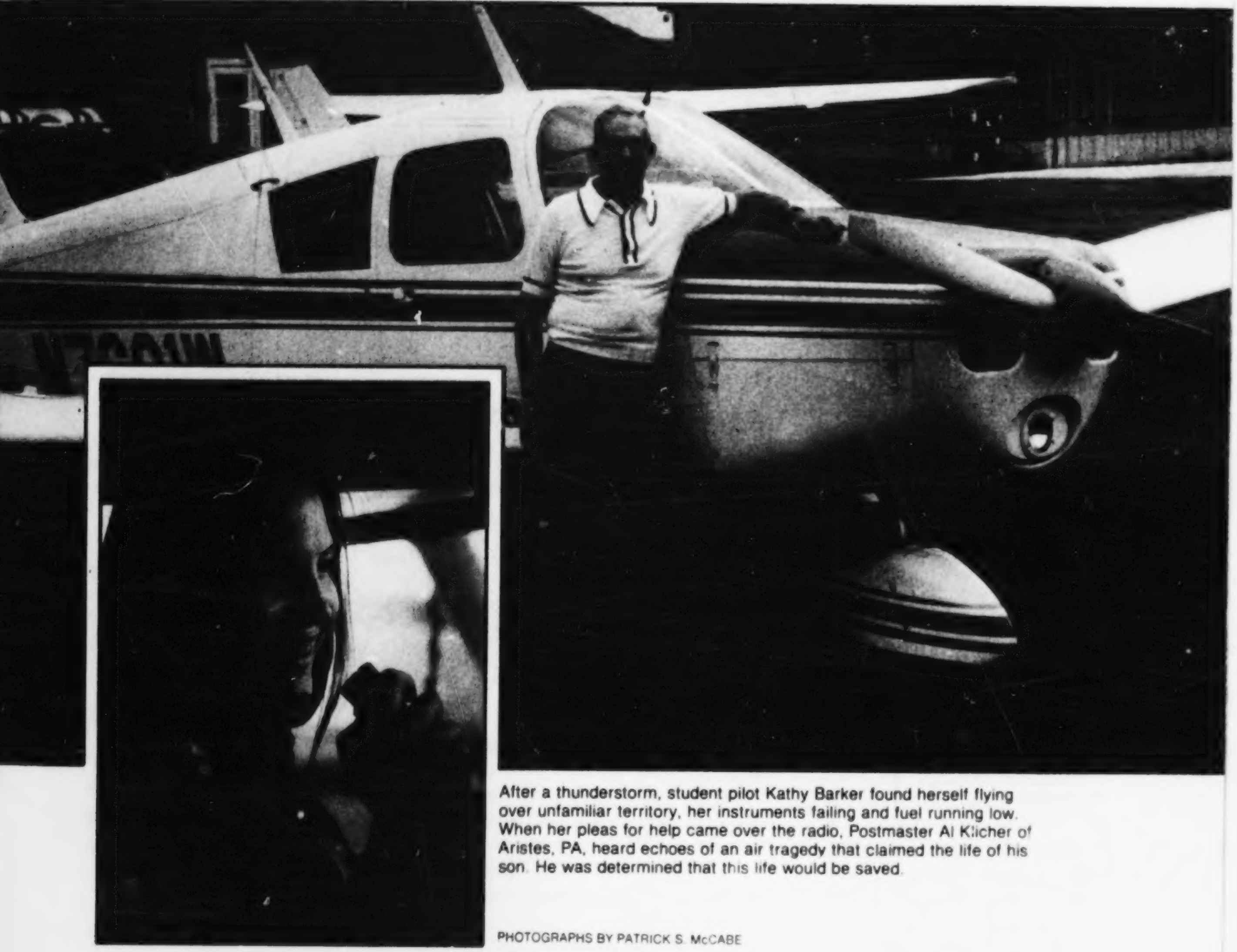
"She kept talking about her fuel. I kept telling her, 'Now, Kathy, just hang in there. It's only a matter of minutes until I find you,' " Klicher related.

More time passed. Klicher asked Kathy to look down and tell him what landmarks she saw. She told him she was flying above a river.

"Could it be the Susquehanna?" Klicher said he asked himself. He had a hunch it was.

Soon, Kathy told the pilot she was flying above two rivers. Could

N THE SKY



After a thunderstorm, student pilot Kathy Barker found herself flying over unfamiliar territory, her instruments failing and fuel running low. When her pleas for help came over the radio, Postmaster Al Klicher of Aristes, PA, heard echoes of an air tragedy that claimed the life of his son. He was determined that this life would be saved.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK S. McCABE

she see a city? Klicher asked her. Yes, she said. Klicher's hunch was right: The city turned out to be Sunbury (PA), where the Susquehanna branches.

Her location pinpointed, Klicher told Kathy to circle in a pattern until he could sight her. He flew in her direction, scanning the horizon until he finally saw her plane.

He radioed for her to follow him. He led her east to the airport at Bear Gap near Elysburg (PA). She touched down safely.

Then, Klicher said, she sat in the plane for a little while and cried.

Before she left, she posed with Klicher for a photograph, snapped by the pilot's wife. That night, her instructor flew from Virginia and took her home. ■

42 DA

What happens when a nation's postal system stops functioning?

In Canada, last summer, the following:

- Businesses lost an estimated $140 million.
- Mail order companies laid off 10,000 to 15,000 employees, and some of these organizations had to shut down permanently.
- Many bills went unpaid, drivers' licenses unrenewed and publications undelivered.
- Lost postal revenues amounted to $300,000 to $500,000 a day in this nation of 24 million people.
- Several businesses are suing the Canadian government for strike-related losses.

In Canada, where strikes against the government are legal, the 42-day walkout by clerks and mail handlers was the sixth such work stoppage in 10 years. These job actions may have resulted in business permanently lost to alternative delivery services.

The combination of stagnant volume, rising costs, and reduced subsidies led to a First-Class rate that nearly doubled January 1, going from 17 cents to 30 cents (25 cents U.S.).

Toronto area courier services expect to keep most of the small business customers they gained during the last strike, explaining that customers seem to be willing to pay the extra money to ensure delivery of their parcels and packages.

Private couriers picked up a great deal of mail business during

OUT MAIL

the walkout, and some businesses also hired students to hand deliver bills and important notices.

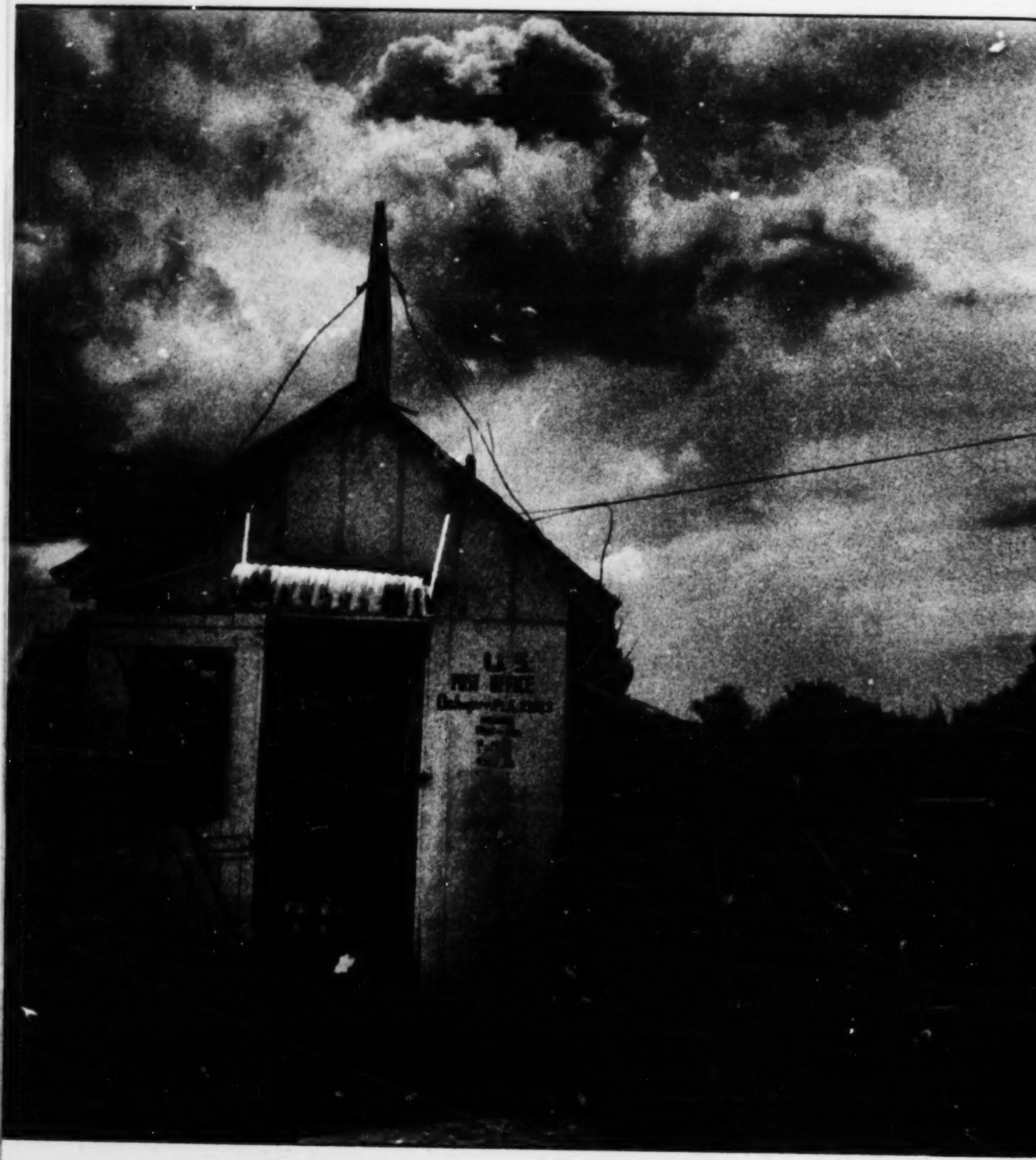
A number of companies, located near the U.S. border, arranged for pick up and deposit of mail in U.S. post offices in order to continue business with U.S. customers.

Several publishing companies increased newsstand sales while others held copies of their magazines. After the strike many people received three issues on the same day of magazines they subscribed to.

Utilities hand delivered bills, and some credit card companies asked customers to call them to find out how much they owed and then to pay their bills at banks. In Quebec, however, a law states that customers cannot be held liable for interest on credit bills not sent to individuals. As a result, there is somewhat of a wrangle now going on regarding interest payments during the strike.

During the walkout, management recalled laid-off carriers for one day to deliver pension and welfare checks. Sorting of these checks was generally unnecessary since the government presorts them down to letter carrier routes.

In the past, the Canada Post could not bargain with its employees, who legally were employed by the Treasury Board of Canada. The recent conversion of the postal system into a Crown Corporation — Canada Post Corp. — will allow postal management and employees to negotiate directly. ■



U.S.
POST OFFICE

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM TSUNODA

smallest

A Trailways bus rolled up. A lone passenger jumped out, snapped a photo of the post office, reboarded, and the bus lumbered away.

Taking a picture of the Ochopee Post Office is not at all unusual. After all, it's the smallest post office building in the United States and quite a tourist attraction.

"People just love this place. They're so excited when they see it," says Postmaster Evelyn Shealy.

Located in the heart of Florida's Everglades, the Ochopee (pronounced o-CHOP-ee) office is a converted fertilizer shed. It's 8 ft. 4 in. by 7 ft. 3 in.—just large enough to serve three customers standing side-by-side at the window counter.

"We get a lot of mail here just to be canceled," says Shealy. Revenues in the office in fiscal 1980 were about $17,000.

"People stop here all the time—to take pictures or to ask for directions," she says. "We're like a chamber of commerce."

The post office is also a Trailways bus stop, and four buses a day stop there. "We also get tour buses," Shealy says, "and we've had as many as three of them in one day."

Located on U.S. Highway 41, the Tamiami Trail, Ochopee serves the 225 families who live year-round in the area, including members of the Seminole and Miccosukee Indian tribes.

They live in chickees—thatched huts with open sides—and often the only sign of modern convenience is a TV antenna. Many Indians get their mail by star route out of Ochopee, and operator Geraldine Bates Fish delivers to 197 boxes. Her route covers 126 miles.

Shealy has been postmaster since 1972. She started clerking there two years earlier when Sidney Brown was still postmaster. Originally, the post office was in Brown's general store. But when a fire destroyed the store in 1953, the fertilizer shed was carted across the highway to the spot it now occupies.

When Shealy and part-time clerk Evelyn Brown (no relation to Sidney Brown) are in the office together, things are pretty tight. Every nook and cranny of the tiny office has some book or flyer tucked away. "We have to use all the space we have," says Shealy, "including our attic."

At Christmastime, there are so many letters and packages, it's difficult for anyone to get inside the building.

Once in a while, an uninvited guest, such as a lizard, runs along the inside wall of the structure, but the postmaster and her clerk pay it no mind. The Everglades is home for all kinds of interesting creatures—alligators in the canals, snakes and lots of frogs.

A while back, Shealy received a memo from the Regional Postmaster General. It asked all postmasters to cut down the energy use. "I said I'd run the post office without electricity during the day," she says. So she turned off the one light and the electric fan. ■

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POSTAL PERSONALITIES

David Garner

David Garner, a Fresno, CA, letter carrier, and his wife, Cathy, have turned their home into a half-way house for wildlife. Under a program licensed by the California Department of Fish and Game, they care for orphaned or injured birds and animals until they become strong enough to return to their natural habitat.

The Garners had been taking care of hawks and owls from the local SPCA when they learned that the overworked staff of state conservation officers needed volunteers. "We thought it wouldn't be any more trouble than what we were already doing," says David.

Their operation is called the Fresno Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Service Inc. They are licensed by the state and federal government. Almost all the food needed for the birds and animals is donated and four veterinarians in the area volunteer their services. In the spring they get 40 to 50 calls a day and average five hours' sleep. When they are too overloaded to accept any more animals, they tell callers what to do over the phone.

Among the 500 animals they have helped this past year were deer, opossums, bobcats, foxes, coyotes and a baby weasel. "Normally these creatures should be released as soon as they are well," says Garner, "otherwise they lose their ability to fend for themselves."

But there are exceptions, like the horned owl that had been shot in the wing. Unable to fly or hunt, he couldn't survive in the wilderness. Zoos already have too many owls and it's against the law to keep them as pets. Their only hope is for a college, university, or museum to provide a home.

The Garners have also raised 10 orphaned baby deer. The mother of one of them was burned by a forest fire and died shortly after giving birth. They don't learn to fear people which puts them at a disadvantage, say the Garners.

Arrangements were made to release them in Yosemite National Park where they won't have to worry about hunters.

The Garners have enlisted 20 volunteers to assist them by taking care of small birds like robins, meadowlarks and finches in their homes. But they warn people about trying to make pets out of wild birds and animals. "It's not only against the law," they say, "it's cruel." ■

Jazz musician Wilfred Middlebrooks was born in Chattanooga, TN, where he played string bass in the school band. After that he went to the Tab Smith Orchestra in St. Louis, spent a couple of years in the Army and played for three years at the Club Oasis in Los Angeles which featured such headliners as Redd Foxx. The next five years found him traveling all over the world as Ella Fitzgerald's bass player. During that time he played at John F. Kennedy's presidential inauguration.

When he settled down in California in 1964 to bring up his daughter and son, now 17 and 16, respectively, that didn't mean he had to give up playing jazz. He has worked for most of the famous record companies and can be seen and heard in the movies, "New York, New York" and "Heart Beat," and on television's "Starsky & Hutch."

Wilfred Middlebrooks

At present he is a custodian for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Post Office during the day and can be heard four nights a week playing with jazz pianist Paul Smith at the Velvet Turtle restaurant in Redondo Beach, CA. They also have recorded albums using a "direct to disc" method which means a first take on everything.

Last fall Middlebrooks was seen and heard with yet another celebrity. On September 4, Cab Calloway aired a TV variety show called "Gift of Music." Many famous entertainers were on hand, including Maria Gibbs, Leslie Uggams, and string bass player Wilfred Middlebrooks. ■

Norita Reuhl

Norita Reuhl, a ZMT clerk at the Cincinnati management sectional center, became interested in astrology 12 years ago as a hobby and finds it so fascinating she teaches a class every week and plans to become a licensed astrologer next year.

Her husband and six children like to poke a little fun at her belief. "But before they sign important papers or make major changes of any kind, they're not too proud to ask me if it's a good time to do it," she smiles.

However, the one thing Reuhl doesn't like about astrology is doing calculations by hand. "I'm too impatient," she says. "I used to mail the information to someone else who calculated the charts for a fee." Then one of her sons heard her say "I wish I had the answer right now." He convinced her that she needed a home computer.

That was two years ago. Now, with the computer's help, she not only has time to prepare charts and teach a class but is able to meet regularly with other noted people involved in astrology and the psyche like Patricia Michell, founder of the Psychic World Organization, and Bill Boshears who writes a column for a local paper entitled "ESP and You."

Reuhl says she plans to study and practice astrology full time after she retires. "I believe it can help people attack their problems at a time when they are most likely to succeed," she says. ■

Tom Neal

During the day he rides a jeep, but at night and on weekends he rides rodeo bulls and broncos.

Letter carrier Tom Neal enjoys the security of his postal salary in Santa Maria, CA, yet aspires to winning big rodeo money. He speaks of the thrill of competing, praises the camaraderie among cowboys.

And these contradictions crystallize to form a well-rounded personality, an asset for winning in any endeavor. "A positive attitude makes a big difference in performance," says Neal. "You are what you think you are. If you think like a champ, then you will become a champ."

Neal's approach to riding came from his father, who followed the rodeo circuit for 30 years. Before getting on a bull he first evaluates the beast's behavior, then envisions himself riding it. Finally, he clears his mind and makes the ride.

"You can't be afraid of the bull," he says, "but you must respect him. On the ground, a bull usually won't bother you unless you challenge or corner him, and if you do that the bull will win."

Like other athletes, bareback riders must keep themselves in top physical condition. Neal considers the walking he does on his mail route an adjunct to his regular calisthenics regime.

For the big roundups lasting a week or more, Neal uses annual leave. But for one night stands he thinks nothing of driving a few hundred miles after work just for an eight-second ride on a bull. ■

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POSTMASTERS
When an employee moves, please remind that person to fill out PS form 1216 (Employee's Current Mailing Address) and to submit it to the personnel office in the post office where he works, making certain the employee's Social Security Number and the office's finance number are included. Do not send change of address to Postal Life.

CONTENTS

14

4

18

2 **KEEPING POSTED**

3 **THE NEW ARRIVAL**
A smooth delivery...the first steps...and E-COM is off and running.

4 **THE PONY EXPRESS**
For 18 months, plucky frontiersmen demonstrated the value of a letter — up to $5 a half ounce — before riding off into the sunset.

8 **THE 1981 ANSWER BOOK**
You moved a record 110 billion pieces of mail...took in more than $19 billion in revenues...and made new notches on an already impressive productivity record...

13 **YOU DID GREAT!**
In a special message to employees, Postmaster General William F. Bolger reports that both service and productivity improved during the first quarter of fiscal year 1982.

14 **NEITHER SNOW NOR...**
During what's been called the worst weather of the 20th century, the public has learned what essential employees can do.

16 **MAYDAY IN THE SKY**
When a student pilot is caught in mid-air, a postmaster flies to the rescue.

18 **42 DAYS WITHOUT MAIL**
What happens when everyone's check is in the mail for more than a month? People in Canada found out last summer.

20 **SMALLEST**
A next-door neighbor to the Everglades, the Ochopee Post Office proves that small is beautiful to tourists as well as customers.

22 **POSTAL PERSONALITIES**

ON OUR COVER: Showing off the new arrival is William (Willy) H. Davis, who is, in real life, a special delivery carrier at the Northern Virginia Management Sectional Center in Merrifield.

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postal life

the magazine for postal employees/mar.-april, 1982

SOLVING A GROWING PROBLEM

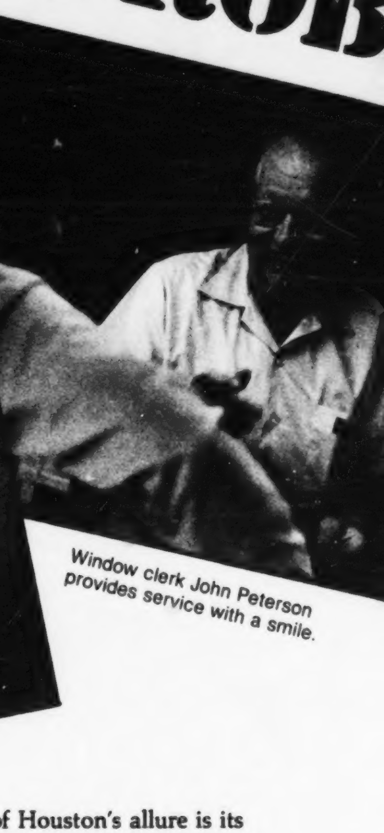
See page 2

SOLVING GROWI PROB

Customer Services Improvement project is pioneered in Houston

Friden
POSTAL WEIGHT
1 lb 9.5
POSTAGE
3.89
NUMERIC ENTRY
60

An electronic scale calculates fees for priority mailing of a certified parcel at a Houston station.



Window clerk John Peterson provides service with a smile.

Houston is a city beset by Texas-size growing pains. The 1980 census ranked it as our fifth largest city and certified it the fastest growing major metropolitan area in the country. The trend continues with more than 1,000 families and vehicles joining its traffic jams each week.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK S. McCABE

One result, as GPO window clerk Lois Clark observes, is that "you wait in line at the bank, at the supermarket, at red lights—you wait everywhere." Another, as director of Customer Services Jairus Beck points out, is that "postal people in Houston are called upon to serve the equivalent of a new city of 100,000 every year—a city the size of Abilene or Waco, TX."

Much of Houston's allure is its booming economy. The home of the Astrodome and the astronauts is also the nation's leading manufacturer of petrochemicals and synthetic rubber...its third largest port...its most prolific builder of new housing...and corporate headquarters for some 60 companies with annual revenues of more than $100 million apiece. A newspaper vendor advertising the "largest job section in the world" captures the mood better than any

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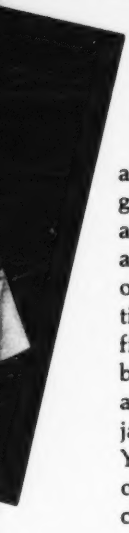

headline in this city: The rate of unemployment is half that of the nation at large.

At the same time, the explosive and unplanned nature of Houston's growth makes it a tough city to get around in, as the Postal Service and everyone else in the business of providing service to its population has unfortunately learned first-hand. Roadways simply can't be built as fast as people pour in and the resulting traffic jams—mammoth even by New York standards—are but one of the obstacles to service inherent in the city's structure.

Houston's city limits enclose 569 square miles, giving the Houston MSC a delivery area of 1,600 square miles when surrounding suburbs are factored into the picture.

Beyond that, Houston has no zoning restrictions and, consequently, none of the usual neighborhood distinctions: A single block may contain a house, a factory, a church, a bar, as well as a medical center. And not only is the city expanding outward—the usual pattern of urban growth—it is expanding inward as developers fill the vacant lots still remaining even downtown. Last year alone, five million square feet of office space rose in the Houston downtown that is bustling with business by day but a virtual ghost town by dusk.

In the summer of '81, it all combined to produce a crisis of sorts for the Postal Service. A heavily advertised front-page story in the Houston Post reported finding unconscionably long waiting times—20, 40, 45 and even 60 minutes—at area postal facilities. That in turn prompted the Congressional subcommittee for postal personnel and modernization (headed by Houston's own Mickey Leland) to conduct an on-site investigation into the whys and wherefores of mail service that couldn't keep pace with population growth.

Postmaster Wally Kido, who came to Houston from California shortly before the Post story broke, recalls the episode this way: "It certainly wasn't a comfortable feeling to be brought in to head up an operation and almost immediately find it under a substantial barrage—an attack—by a major portion of the metropolitan media. But by and large, the story was accurate, responsible reporting—though it should be noted that it followed closely on the heels of a rate increase.

"In retrospect, I suppose they did us a favor—and I said so at the hearings. Sure, it put a spotlight on Houston's problems, but it also led to a commitment at all levels to solve those problems—and fast. The response within the Postal Service didn't take the form of criticism, it took the form of 'Houston's got a problem, we've got to help them.'"

The effort was so successful that it has since evolved into a multi-pronged Customer Services Improvement program, elements of which are now being implemented in big-city post offices nationwide. It is already underway in Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Dallas, and Miami, and will soon be coming to Milwaukee, Detroit, Albany, Boston, Oakland,

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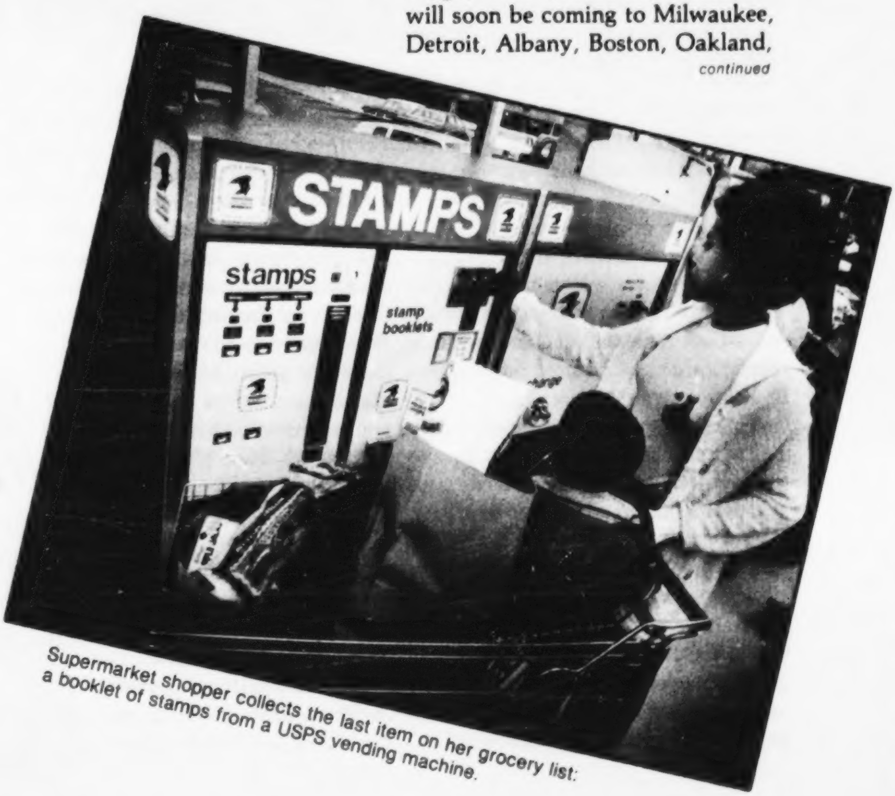
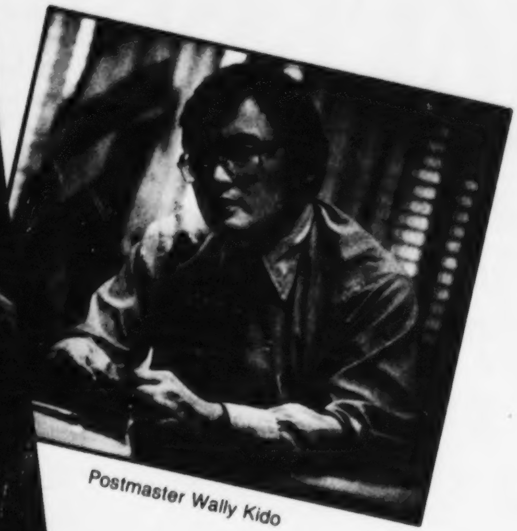


Supermarket shopper collects the last item on her grocery list: a booklet of stamps from a USPS vending machine.

Thomas B. Simpson, Jr., manager of GPO window services, demonstrates the popular "Houston sweep."



Postmaster Wally Kido

and San Jose. The plan is to bring the program on-line in two additional cities in each of the Postal Service's five regions each year.

The program isn't as much a series of techniques as a commitment to a philosophy of flexibility. In essence, it boils down to a touch of technology leavened with a healthy dose of common sense—with an emphasis on the latter—ending up with real teamwork.

In Houston, action to improve customer service started with recognition of a harsh reality: Given the three-year lead-time required for construction of a wholly new facility, more offices could be part of the solution for the future—but not the present. Accordingly, a range of innovative strategies was developed for each of the perceived trouble spots:

- **Long lines.** An innovation immediately popular on both sides of the service counter was the "Houston sweep," which puts clerks on patrol in lobbies distributing forms and handling routine functions to keep waiting lines short. Houston has also installed new vending equipment in the lobbies of all postal facilities, and introduced another change especially welcomed by clerks—a compact, easy-to-use book on rates and services with plastic-encased pages and colored tabs.
- **Accessibility of postal facilities.** Here the focus was on providing services in places people would visit anyway. Stamp vending and change machines have been installed in Houston supermarkets and drug stores, and five department stores are being equipped with mini-service centers complete with scales and lockboxes. Both operations are maintained and serviced by USPS personnel. In a related effort, 10,000 new lockboxes were installed throughout the city and another 12,000 were slated for installation this coming year.
- **Image.** Some traditional techniques were used to upgrade the Postal Service's image—sprucing up lobbies and vehicles with paint and polish—as well as some not-so-traditional ones, such as installing programmable calculators and electronic scales at windows. To heighten their sensitivity to customers' concerns, window clerks took part in a special courtesy training program that features role playing. And to assure no base was left untouched, teams of supervisors and craft employees particularly expert in

retail operations conducted in-depth "image audits" in stations throughout the city.

But in the final analysis, what has made the biggest difference of all in Houston is the commitment of individuals at all levels to make it their personal business to improve service. In short, the postal people of Houston have dedicated themselves to proving that providing good service is indeed a priority of highest order in the Postal Service.

What that entaiis varies from person to person, from place to place. What remains constant is the attitude that there is always something to be done.

Window clerk Lois Hart may well be right when she observes, "It's just human nature to complain."

But this veteran of Houston's courtesy training program also has a surefire technique for leaving even an irate customer with a good impression of the Postal Service: "When someone complains to me, I just apologize for the problem and smile and say, 'Have a nice day.'"■

PRIVATE POSTAL BOXES
CONVENIENT • PRIVATE
SECURE
STAMP MACHINE

Demand for lockboxes has put more than two dozen privately-owned lockbox services in competition with the USPS.

CLERKS WELCOME 'SMART' SCALES, CALCULATORS

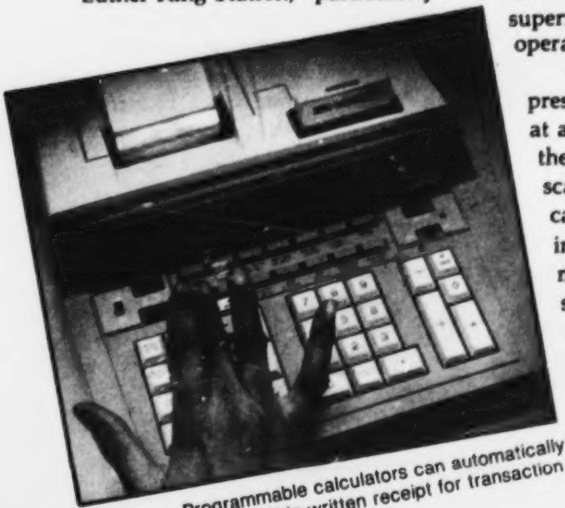
Among Houston window clerks, the odds-on favorite of the Customer Services Improvement Project is the computer technology behind their new programmable calculators and electronic scales.

"They have really made a big difference," says window clerk Catherine Rosette of the Martin Luther King Station, "particularly when it comes to finding rates for foreign countries and recording the money orders that are always in heavy demand here around the first of the month."

The automated equipment at Houston windows—now being introduced in selected postal facilities nationwide—functions much like the devices already in wide use in supermarkets and other retail operations.

When a customer presents an item for mailing at a window with automation, the clerk puts it on a scale connected to a "smart" calculator. The programs in the scale's electronic memory make all necessary computations once information about service classification, destination ZIP Code, and other relevant variables has been entered through the attached keyboard. The scale calculates the postage rate in a matter of seconds and flashes it on a small screen in front of the customer.

A push of a button transfers a record of the entire transaction to the calculator's memory, where it is stored until the time comes to prepare the day's accountability forms. Pushing a button on the calculator produces a written receipt that lists all services provided and the amounts charged for them, as well as the total charged and the amount of change returned to the customer. At the end of the day, the accountability report for each clerk who has worked at the window can be ready in less than a minute, as compared to the 20 minutes or more it takes to prepare each one manually.■



Programmable calculators can automatically provide written receipt for transaction.

To paraphrase Mark Twain

THE REPORTS OF OUR DEATH HA

A columnist writing in Newsweek magazine has coined the term "future shuck" for the stories we're all seeing about how electronics and home computers are going to change our lives. He says he turned skeptical about "professional futurists" when he realized that none of the predictions he'd read as a child had ever come to be.

People who have followed predictions about the Postal Service over the years have good reason to share the columnist's suspicion of futurists.

We've been fed stories about the coming demise of the Postal Service for as long as we can remember. The scenario is that electronic communications will eliminate the need for physical delivery of mail and turn the postal system into a dead letter office.

The debate—which has been not *whether* this is true, but *when* it will happen—actually began in the 19th century. In 1872 Postmaster General John A. J. Creswell—having witnessed the invention of the telegraph and facsimile transmission (discovered in 1850)—used his annual report to announce the approaching decline in the need for postal services. It was inevitable, he said.

A hundred years later—in the mid 1970s—the inevitable hadn't happened, but a trio of economic forecasts again predicted a terminal trend in mail volume. One of these gloomy analyses said that volume could drop as low as 65 billion pieces by 1981; the most optimistic projection was 91 billion pieces for that year.

It's fortunate that these "experts" didn't have to pay a penny per error—the prediction closest to the mark was off by 19 billion pieces. Apparently, everyone was listening to the experts except mailers. Annual mail volume climbed to 97 billion pieces in 1978, 100 billion in 1979, soared to 106 billion pieces the following year, and hit 110 billion in 1981. Current projections put 1982 volume at 113 billion pieces—and this despite the 15-to-20-cent rate increase last year.

Who mails what and to whom

*Includes government and non-profit sectors

Where did the futurists' "doom and gloom" thesis go wrong? It sounded logical when they said it. Was their timing off? Is a massive volume slump just around the corner? Is the mailstream still destined to become a trickle?

In a word, the answer is "no," according to William R. Cummings, Assistant Postmaster General for Planning—although he feels "not likely" is the better term. "The fact is," says Cummings, "the key to future volume lies in whether the Postal Service can maintain the greater rate stability it achieved in the second half of the '70s."

In his view, there are two major flaws in the doom and gloom thesis: one was discounting the Postal Service's ability to affect its own fate, and the second was a failure to take the long view.

Cummings, whose department has been responsible for untangling the truth from the forecasts of the past, says that precise data on the Postal Service's business and a healthy dose of 20-20 hindsight has made the task a lot easier.

He sympathizes with his predecessors. In the early '70s they witnessed the effects of a series of postage rate boosts as the newly formed Postal Service shifted the cost of running the organization from the taxpayers to ratepayers—all during a period of double-digit inflation. Each increase stifled volume growth, and in 1975 there was an actual dip in volume. The experts, reasoning that the postal system's overhead would grow with inflation, figured that unit costs would continue to rise as volume stood still. They foresaw a vicious cycle of higher rates, lower volume, higher rates. And this, they concluded, would push the nation into electronic communications and leave the USPS holding the bag.

Looking back at the last decade, it's easier to see that the stagnating volume of the early '70s resulted

VE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED

from the one-two punch of higher rates and the nation's worst recession since the Great Depression. But to get the best view of what happened it's necessary to stand back still farther and look at mail volume since 1886 (the first year of adequate volume data). Over the roughly 100 years since then, volume has faltered only twice: during the depression of the '30s and again in the recession of the '70s.

Cummings: "The fact of the matter is that electronics have been diverting business away from the Postal Service ever since 1837 when the Post Office Department gave Samuel Morse the seed money to invent the telegraph.

"But our volume has increased almost every year since that time, despite the fact that the telegraph has been joined by the telephone, radio, television, cable, microwave, and now data communications via satellite."

Cummings' basic message is that you need only chart three factors—mail volume, population and the country's economy—to see what affects the mailstream: that is, mail volume increases when there is growth in population, number of households and disposable income.

Given this pattern he sees a favorable outlook for volume growth in the coming decade, since long-term forecasts predict healthy economic growth over the next 25 years and the Census Bureau predicts 22 million more people and 16 million new households by 1990.

But the question still remains: Will this hold true as the impact of the electronic communications is felt? In answer, Cummings notes that a detailed study of who mails what and to whom, begun in the late 1970s, shows that mail is primarily a means for business to remain in contact with its customers. Business sends 56 percent of all mail to households (when AT&T wants to reach out and touch its customers, it must use the U.S. mail) and another 11 percent is sent by households back to business. Subtract the household-to-household correspondence and that leaves only about 27 percent of all mail that is business-to-business—that segment which is most susceptible to diversion by business-to-business electronic communications.

> "The fact of the matter is that electronics have been diverting business away from the Postal Service ever since 1837...but our volume has increased almost every year since that time, despite the fact that the telegraph has been joined by the telephone, radio, television, cable, microwave, and now data communications via satellite."

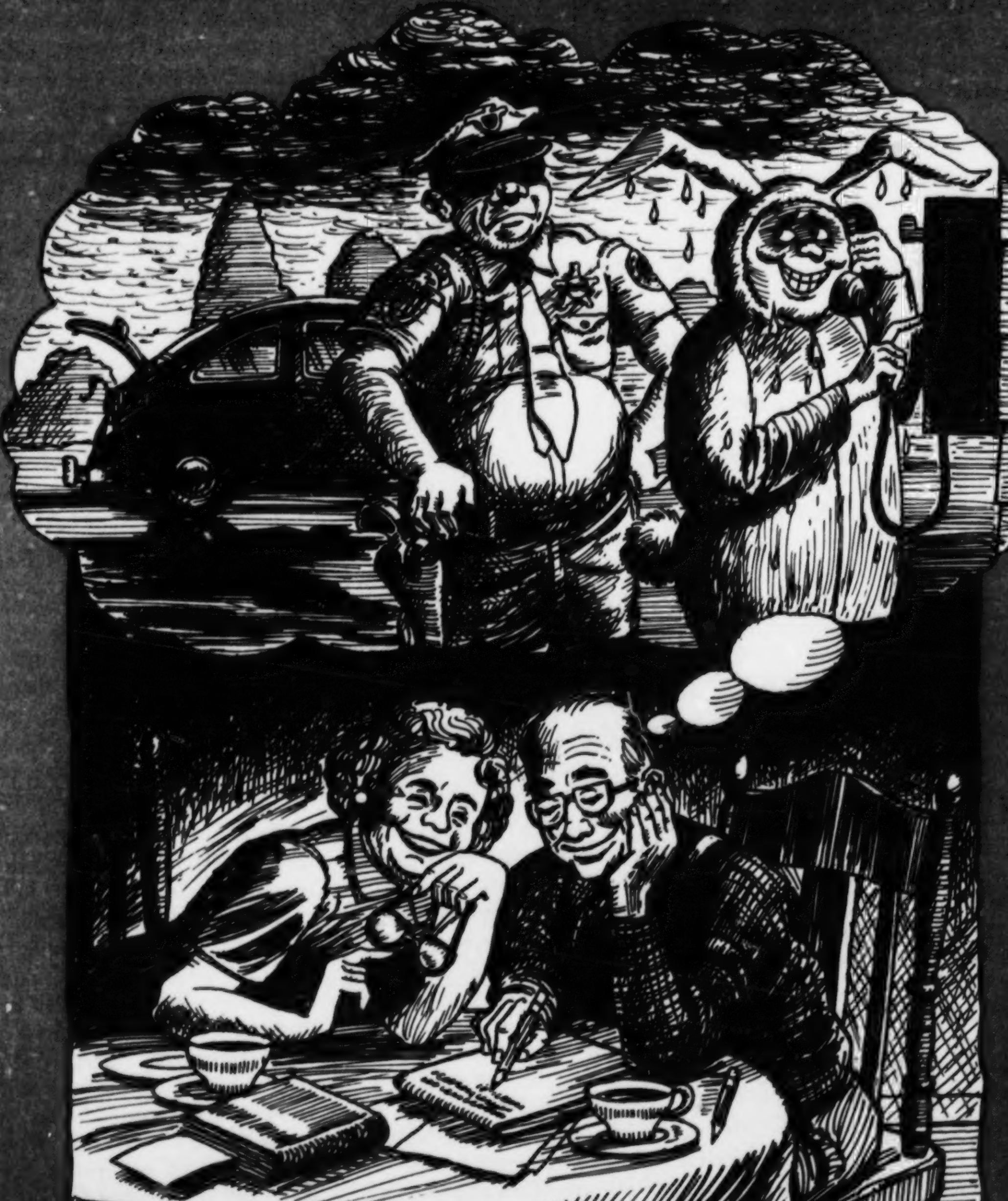
"If," Cummings wonders, "the growth of electronics means the end of delivery organizations, where are the analysts predicting that United Parcel Service will be out of business in the year 2000? Or that the electronic wave of the future is going to swamp Federal Express? We're in the same line of work as they are—and the Emerys, the Airbornes, etc. The only difference is that we deliver mail and merchandise on a universal basis."

Factor in the fit and trim Postal Service of the 1980s—which handled 30 percent more mail with 10 percent fewer employees in 1981 than it did in 1970—and Cummings becomes even more confident about the next two decades.

There are clouds on the horizon—and some nearer to hand. The current recession, for instance, could slow volume, he believes, although it apparently hasn't in the first two quarters of this fiscal year.

However, if the long-term economic health of the country holds to current forecasts, Cummings believes that the only thing that could put his predictions in the "future shuck" category is a drop in USPS productivity and the pressure this would have on rates. But with the introduction of letter-mail processing automation that's scheduled to start this fall and with ZIP+4 incentives slated for 1983, he believes we will be able to maintain our highly favorable productivity growth. ■

Around the Cracker Barrel



Georgia Postmaster spins hometown humor into book

You might call Fred Peterson the Postal Service's Mark Twain.

Postal employees have been chuckling over Peterson's homespun stories for 20 years, and he hasn't run out of anecdotes yet. "And I never will," vows Peterson, the postmaster of Vidalia, GA, since 1957.

He and his wife Kitty, the "Missus," weave everyday events in a mythical post office and town into monthly columns that appear in the state and national magazines of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States.

The columns are sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant, and always human. They poke fun at Headquarters people, sectional center managers, postal inspectors, substitute rural carriers, demanding customers, neighbors, members of the Peterson clan, and, most often, Peterson himself.

For instance, there's the time (according to one of his tales) he was stranded in his daughter's car during a rainstorm. Soaking wet and chilled to the bone, he had a choice between pneumonia and changing into a bunny suit his daughter planned to use in her work with children. After the storm passed, he attempted to fix the car, darting in and out of bushes to avoid being seen by passing motorists—unsuccessfully. The sheriff allowed Peterson one phone call before locking him up for the night. He called his wife—and got a wrong number.

Peterson's "cracker barrel" stories remind readers of the times long gone, when people managed without indoor plumbing, no one locked their doors and the "mailman" knew everyone on his route personally.

Most of Peterson's characters are composites of people he has known or met, fleshed out with a generous helping of imagination. A favorite, for example, is a substitute rural carrier named Jeb Cooty, "the most miserable burden fate ever wished upon anyone." Jeb gets his boss [Peterson] in all kinds of jams with postal higher-ups and then weasels out of the responsibility by saying, "I never tole those fellers these things wuz my idea, I gave you all the credit."

Peterson also likes to poke gentle fun at "those fellers up in Washington." Without fail, when they come down to Georgia to straighten out the post office, they end up being outwitted by the local folks.

Like the time Mr. Tippins, a representative of Delivery Services, came to remeasure Vidalia's rural route—arriving right after a community club had been inspired to run a contest for the most original mailbox.

As the story goes, Mr. Tippins was in an unreceptive mood to begin with because the regular carrier was home with the flu, and the postmaster had to drive Tippins over the route. His disposition disintegrated further as they drove past a mailbox mounted on an old grain cradle, another on a rusty plow, boxes in tree stumps, on welded chains, a miniature red schoolhouse, a covered wagon, and a metal stalk of corn with the box on one of the extended leaves—all candidates for the originality prize.

"It was pretty sticky in the car," writes Peterson. "We were using Mr. T's automobile, of course, since it had been calibrated for the measuring, and I just had to sit and take it when he told me what he thought. I knew that when he got through with me back at the sectional center I'd do well to keep my job."

But deliverance came in the form of Sally Kate, a member of the contest committee. Sally Kate waylaid them just before they turned back on the hard road. In no time at all, she appointed Mr. Tippins one of the judges and had a picture taken of him surrounded by young lovelies holding a mailbox in a large hornet's nest bearing the sign, "First Prize." The picture was subsequently sent to Tippins to hang on his office wall at Headquarters. "We never heard [about] the package, but I know it was received. It went registered, special delivery, and special handling."

It's left to the reader to decide whether "cracker barrel" stories are true, partially true or pure fiction. But most people are so busy laughing they never think about it—even postal inspectors.

Peterson often reserves space in his columns for postal inspectors. "I used to laugh," he writes in one column, "when somebody told that old joke about the two biggest liars in the world: the postal inspector who appears at a post office saying, 'I've come to help you,' and the postmaster who admits him with the even bigger lie, 'I'm glad to see you.' I thought it was pretty funny. I told it to the barrel gang, and the next time an inspector came they told it to him. It isn't funny anymore."

Once, while Peterson was away at the funeral of his wife's uncle, the sectional center manager ("a man who obviously hates me") made Jeb officer-in-charge. Jeb not only took charge of the post office but also of the general store where the mythical post office is located. When two visiting inspectors noticed Jeb blithely using the money from both places interchangeably, he cheerfully explained: Mister Fred had taught him everything he knows about the post office. And Jeb volunteered a lot of other stuff about Mister Fred. "He don't think none uv you knows what you're doing. He don't think none uv you's got sense enough to come down here and run his post office."

By popular demand, some of

continued

Peterson's columns, as well as new material, were recently collected and published in book form. In relating these tales, Peterson says he is always careful about "not stepping on anyone's toes." As the book states: "Not only is any similarity between the characters in this book and real people, living or dead, coincidental, any people who claim a similarity should be ashamed of themselves."

The "cracker barrel" editorial staff includes Peterson's wife, Kitty, a school teacher and newspaper editor; their daughter, Catherine, a speech pathologist, costumer, and public speaker; their son-in-law, Carlton Harrison, a professional photographer, and writer; their son Martin, a radio disc jockey, nuclear plant construction supervisor, artist, and humorist; their daughter-in-law, Laura, a quality assurance engineer; and mother-in-law Beula Martin, a former public school teacher who has taught Sunday school for 73 years and, according to Peterson, the only good speller in the bunch.

JUDGE
FIRST PRIZE
VIDA

Story conferences are held informally around the dining room table. "We sit and talk," says Peterson, "and the stories just sort of grow out of the everyday things we talk about. Usually, we'll be working on two or three stories at a time."

Like Peterson's stories, his career as a journalist just sort of grew. In 1962, as an officer of his state's postmaster organization, he was asked to submit an article for its publication, the Cracker Postmaster. That led to a regular column called "Georgia on My Mind," which led to a column in NAPUS' national Gazette called "Around the Cracker Barrel."

Though Peterson portrays himself as a long-suffering postmaster constantly concerned about losing his job, in reality he is a very savvy businessman who crosses his "t's," dots his "I's," and carefully counts the revenue units of a level-20 post office serving 23,000 city and rural customers. ■

A sample from the Cracker Barrel

....I had made it to the church and through one-third of the service when consciousness returned. Evidently things were going smoothly. I walked down to the altar rail as the ushers came forward to take up the collection. Behind me Ruth Barham of Paulsville was singing a solo part in the new anthem and it was beautiful.

I stood a little taller as I got caught up in the service and reached out to take the collection plates. It was then I realized that my jinx had not passed. There were no collection plates.

"Where are they?" the head usher whispered.

"I don't know," I whispered back.

"Could they be in the pastor's study?"

I reached in my pocket, extracted the key and handed it to him. While the anthem continued he slipped out of the sanctuary and to the preacher's study. After what seemed eons to me he returned. He handed back the key and around it was the lock out of the door.

"What happened?" I whispered.

"The whole thing came out."

"Did you find the plates?"

"I didn't get in."

I slipped out to the office and with my knife managed to get the door open. But it was no use. The collection plates were not there. I returned to the sanctuary where the puzzled choir was beginning its last verse for the third time.

Unwilling to tell the preacher I had failed to take up any money I opened some song books and passed them to the ushers. But they weren't good substitutes. People with folding money were afraid it would fall off, and some of the pocket change did.

The big finish came when Miss Azalea got a book loaded with silver and dropped it. Miss Azalea, the village character who carried the Missus on that wild automobile ride down the railroad track a couple of months ago, was not a bit disturbed. She got right down on her hands and knees and began scooping it up. Children from all over the church dived under seats to help, and pretty soon the men and women had joined in.

My impulse was to walk away and never come back. I turned to leave—and then I turned back. I had accomplished something, I realized, that even the preacher couldn't. Through my bungling I had got more people on their knees in that sanctuary than I had seen since I was a boy. ■

—Reprinted by permission from Around the Cracker Barrel

AIR-POWERED P.O.

Down on the windy flatlands of the Texas Panhandle it's not at all unusual to see a windmill or two on the landscape. But the latest addition to the area's skyline—a windmill in the parking lot of the Borger, TX, Post Office—might be cause for a double take.

The first erected on a postal site, the windmill represents a small, but unique contribution to a major, nationwide Postal Service effort to use alternative energy sources and save money.

Since installation in September of this year, the modern version of an age-old energy producer has been converting the fast-blowing winds of the region's flat terrain into heating and cooling for the three-year-old postal facility.

Borger was chosen for a one-year test of the windmill because the Panhandle has the highest wind energy in the continental United States. Winds average 14 m.p.h. and a 26 m.p.h. wind is commonplace in the town, located about 50 miles northeast of Amarillo.

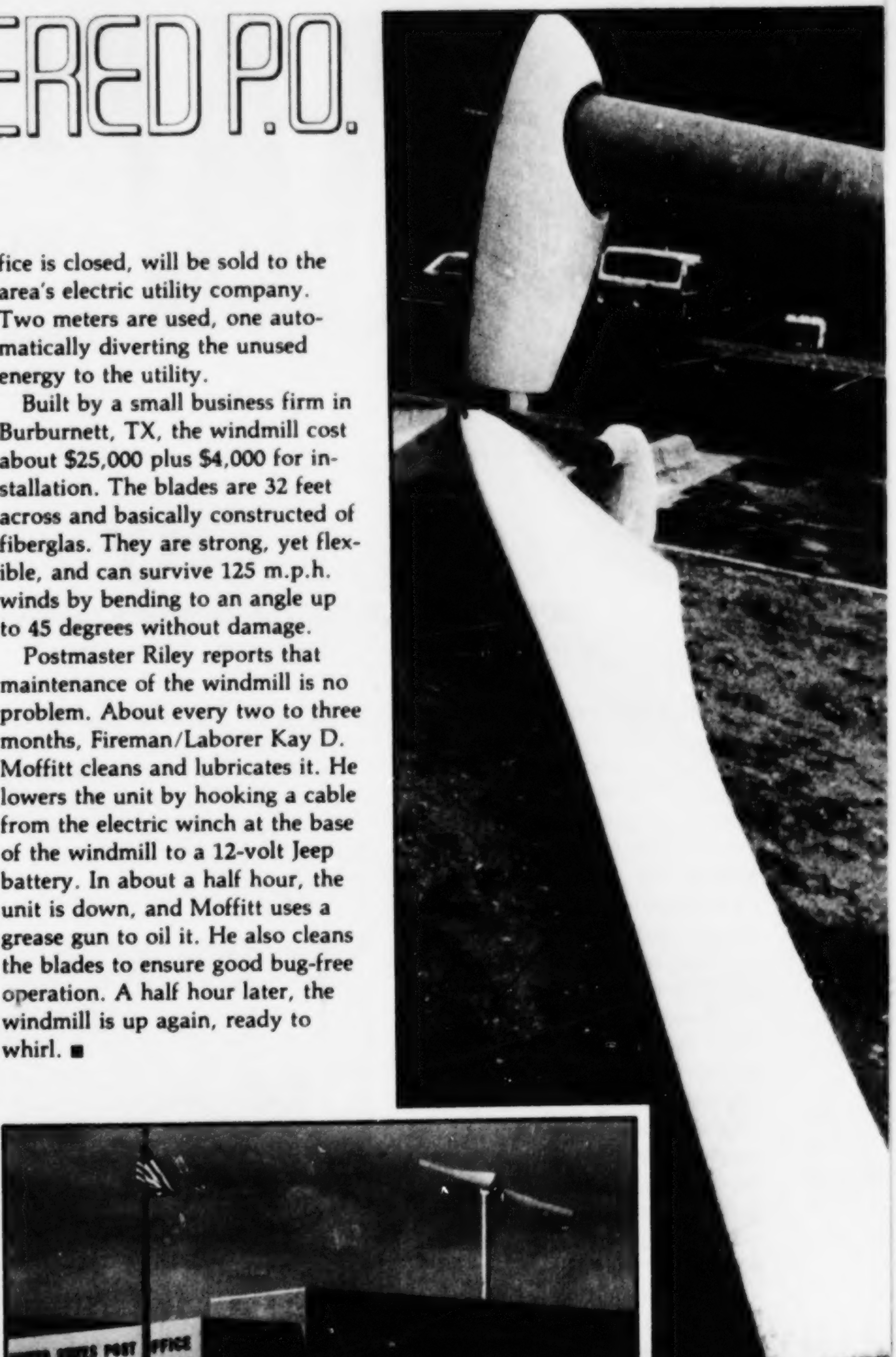
"We need a little less than an eight-mile-an-hour wind to generate power," Borger Postmaster W.T. (Dub) Riley says. "During our first month of operation we used one-third fewer kilowatts than normal. And, overall we expect the windmill to provide about 40 percent of our electricity."

The wind generator has a maximum output of 30,000 watts of electricity in a 30 to 40 m.p.h. wind. This is roughly equivalent to the needs of 15 average homes.

Energy that is not used, particularly during the hours the post office is closed, will be sold to the area's electric utility company. Two meters are used, one automatically diverting the unused energy to the utility.

Built by a small business firm in Burburnett, TX, the windmill cost about $25,000 plus $4,000 for installation. The blades are 32 feet across and basically constructed of fiberglas. They are strong, yet flexible, and can survive 125 m.p.h. winds by bending to an angle up to 45 degrees without damage.

Postmaster Riley reports that maintenance of the windmill is no problem. About every two to three months, Fireman/Laborer Kay D. Moffitt cleans and lubricates it. He lowers the unit by hooking a cable from the electric winch at the base of the windmill to a 12-volt Jeep battery. In about a half hour, the unit is down, and Moffitt uses a grease gun to oil it. He also cleans the blades to ensure good bug-free operation. A half hour later, the windmill is up again, ready to whirl. ■



WILLING AND ABLE

All over the country postal employees are deciding they'd rather be paid for working instead of not working. More than 1,000 have come back after on-the-job injuries; others have refused to let a handicap cripple their lives.

'My co-workers make me feel like I've never been off... It's great to be back.'

Ralph Shorten, Betty Bateman and Jay Johnson feel that you can't put a price tag on self-esteem. They should know. They've gotten it back.

These Salt Lake City management sectional center employees have returned to limited duty jobs as part of a special program aimed at reducing the multi-million dollar cost of workers' compensation.

Before the program began in Fiscal 1980, employees injured on the job had no choice except workers' compensation or disability retirement. There were no jobs for them. Feelings of dependency, depression and anxiety became a daily source of punishment for many who felt the most productive part of their lives was over.

"When I first left because of my back injury, I thought to myself, 'Is this the way it's going to be the rest of my life?'" says Ogden, UT, clerk Ralph Shorten, whose slip on the ice more than five years ago ended a two-decade career as a carrier. "It's not an easy thing to push your wife out the door every morning to work while you stay home."

Salt Lake City distribution clerks Betty Bateman and Jay Johnson expressed similar feelings. "It was hard to depend on others to take care of you, to do things for you," Bateman says.

Johnson agrees. "There were many things I wanted to do but I couldn't, and when I couldn't, I ended up feeling sort of useless."

continued on page 14

Betty Bates and Jay Johnson traded disability payments for a sense of independence and say they got the best of the bargain.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT SATTERTHWAITE

'If I didn't try I'd always be wondering if I could have done it.'

He remembers the gnawing fear he felt lying there in the hospital bed. Infection had set in, brought on, they said, by his diabetic condition. For a whole week, he wasn't sure what they would decide. Neither were the doctors. Finally, the doctor came and told him they couldn't save it. The leg would have to come off.

That was a little more than a year ago. Today, Henry F. Corley recalls his first thoughts on hearing the doctors' decision.

"It was pretty frightening. I wondered how I'd be able to function. Would I be able to go back to work?"

As a letter carrier in the Columbia, SC, Post Office, Corley viewed his legs as his livelihood. Friends suggested he retire; the doctors said that he might only be 50 percent as active as he was before the operation.

Some of his fellow carriers doubted they'd see him after the operation. "I think most people in Henry's situation would have just sat back and collected disability checks for the rest of their lives," says one of his co-workers.

Jim Lattimore, his supervisor and station manager at the time, recalls when he visited Corley in the hospital right after the amputation.

"He was sitting in a wheelchair and several people were in the room at the time. The leg hadn't even begun to heal yet. He looked up at me and at the others in the

continued on page 15

An amputated leg couldn't stop Henry Corley from tackling his old route—one of the toughest in the Columbia, SC Post Office.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB BECKER

'My co-workers make me feel like I've never been off...'

continued from page 12

Now, thanks to a rehabilitation program developed by the USPS and the Department of Labor, all three have returned to postal jobs.

The concept of providing injured employees with limited-duty jobs surfaced when the Postal Service began looking at ways to reduce the outlay for workers' compensation which in FY 1981 cost the USPS about $186 million. Accrued liability, which must be set aside to cover employees until their retirement—is about $2.5 billion.

In the past, when employees went out on workers' compensation, they were required to provide doctors' statements certifying their inability to perform their current duties. After a year, if the employee had not recovered, he or she would be asked to file for disability retirement. Once the disability retirement was approved, the Civil Service Commission then came back and gave the applicant the choice of receiving either disability retirement or workers' compensation. Most opted for the latter because, in most cases, the disability retirement would provide income far below the percentage set for workers' compensation.

All that's changed now. Instead of a doctor's statement, the Postal Service requires a "work tolerance" report. Completed by both the injured employee's physician and the Office of Workers' Compensation, it includes a statement of what work the employee is capable of performing as well as any specific work limitations. If a review shows a former employee is able to perform useful work, the Postal Service offers the individual a job within the specified restrictions outlined in the report.

In most instances, the job offer guarantees the employee full credit toward retirement, full pay and benefits at the step they were in when they left, no matter how long the employee remained off the job. If he or she refuses the offer, the Postal Service notifies the Office of Workers' Compensation which then takes action to cut off the employee's compensation benefits. If the employee appeals the decision and loses, the only recourse, if the employee qualifies, is disability retirement.

At first, choosing between working again or disability retirement is an unpleasant decision to make, says Salt Lake City Injury Compensation Supervisor Geri Littlewood. "No one I've talked with initially is happy or has a good attitude about coming back to work, mainly because they feel their lives are being disrupted, especially after they've been off work for five or six years. But I try to explain that they were injured working for the Postal Service and are paid benefits by the Postal Service and now that they are able to perform some work, we want them to be part of the organization again."

But once employees return to work, most doubts vanish.

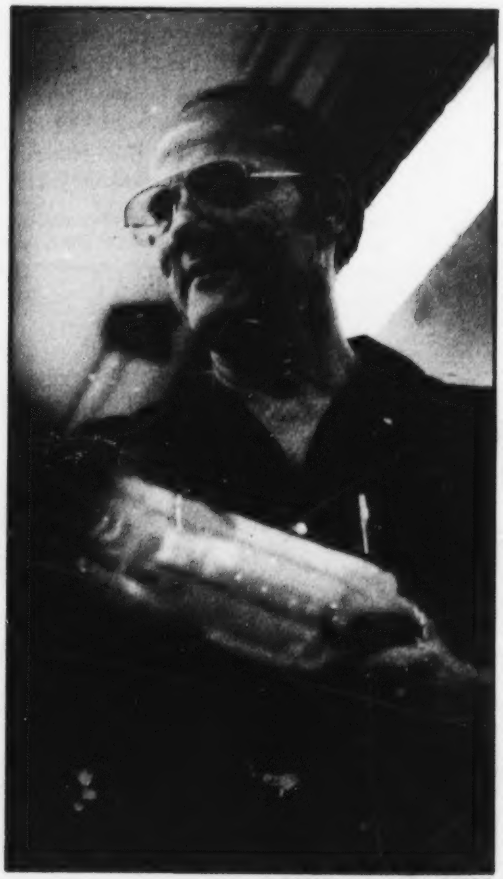
"My co-workers make me feel like I've never been off, even though I'm working with an entirely different crew than before," says 25-year veteran Shorten, who returned to work about two years ago. "It was tough leaving my friends in the first place, but now that I've returned I find I have just as many new ones. It's great being back."

Johnson, who accepted a clerk job in the box section of the Main Post Office in July 1980 after five years on workers' compensation, says he wasn't surprised to hear the Postal Service was trying to bring people back, and after he thought about his options carefully, he decided to accept the job offer. "I have enough years in where I could get a decent disability retirement," he says, "but I figured I can hurt as well here as at home, so I came back. I'm really glad I did because everyone seems pleased to see me back."

Specific disabilities require accommodations by the Postal Service. For example, Johnson, who is considered 30 percent disabled with a back injury, cannot stand for more than four hours, so arrangements were made for him to work nixies and mark-up mail sitting down.

After back surgery to remove a portion of her spine, Bateman is unable to move her arms higher than her shoulders without painful muscle spasms, so the Salt Lake City maintenance crew turned a

Ralph Shorten; "It's not an easy thing to push your wife out the door every morning to work while you stay at home."



PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHY FORGIE

wing case on its side and built two special wings to her specifications.

While the Postal Service does everything it can to assist injured employees, the employees themselves also are required to make some compromises.

Since he lost his craft seniority when he changed jobs, Shorten admits he's "low man on the totem pole" which means it may be some time before he can bid off his tour 1 job and onto something "more compatible to my home life," he says. "Still," he adds, "I live with the pain of an arthritic back anyway so I feel I'm as well off here as I would be at home, even with this shift."

Johnson has a "3 to 11 a.m. tour of duty with split days off." Even though he retained his full seniority, his lifting restrictions limit his choice of jobs, but he adds, "I'll be able to bid eventually on something I like."

Bateman's biggest adjustment was learning to depend on others. "I used to handle all the trays of mail myself, but I've had to get used to the fact I can't lift more than 10 pounds now," she says. "I guess the hardest adjustment I had to make was and is watching others do what I used to do and now can't."

By returning injured employees to productive work, Salt Lake City saved $132,000 in 1981, according to Littlewood, and the Western Region has saved $2.9 million. Nationally, more than 1,000 employees have become wage earners once again for an annual savings of $12 million in 1981. "But to me," says Littlewood, "and I'm sure to many of the injured employees, the biggest reward isn't financial. It's seeing these people return to a productive lifestyle, one that makes them feel good about themselves."

Ralph Shorten, Betty Bateman and Jay Johnson couldn't agree more.■ *—Kathy Forgie*

'If I didn't try...'

continued from page 13

room and simply said, 'I'm coming back to work. I'm coming back.' It was overwhelming."

For the next several weeks while he was recovering, he would hobble into the office on crutches to visit his co-workers and remind Lattimore that he would return.

"I was determined," says Corley, 44, the father of two teenage daughters. "To me it was just something I had to do. It was for my own peace of mind. If I didn't try, I'd always be wondering if I could have done it. Besides, I love my job. It's always been an important part of my life."

Henry Corley did return, and only seven months after the amputation. With the aid of an artificial limb, he went back on his old route—one of the most demanding of the 169 routes serving the capital city of South Carolina. And since then he has consistently managed to complete it without overtime.

Hiram Riley, Jr., letter carrier: "I'm his T-6. And I'm telling you that route is something else. He's got a set of apartments out there, 309 of them, and they all have door slots. All walking. It takes two hours to do them all. And there's no shortcuts either. Henry's never complained. I give him a lot of credit. A lot of people would have given up."

Henry Corley's performance and dedication have become an inspiration for the entire office. Says Columbia Sectional Center Manager/Postmaster Roy Watts, "He continues to be so low-key about his handicap, almost as if there weren't any handicap. I spoke with him two days after he came back. He told me, 'It's not too big a deal, Mr. Watts. I can still do my job.'"

His fellow carriers and his customers agree.

Paul Huggins, letter carrier: "Henry was an award winner when he had two good legs. (He received a letter of commendation after seven months of service in 1965 and a superior achievement award for exemplary performance as a mail handler in 1971.) And he's had an influence on our substitutes. They want to be able to work their assigned routes and be finished in eight hours."

Letter carrier Grayford Williams: "In fact, on certain routes, he would stop and give me a hand [casing] then go on to finish his route, all with no overtime. How he did it I don't know."

Jimmie Bridges, letter carrier: "He has remained the same person he was before the operation. He hasn't felt sorry for himself, he's still Henry."

Letter carrier Lee Hass: "When he came back with his artificial leg I think he still had some pain. But he endured it and I never heard him complain."

Bernadette Kubilus, manager of the apartment complex on Henry's route: "Frankly, we didn't expect to see him come back. It's such a difficult job delivering to all those apartments, in all kinds of weather. He's given us excellent service both before and after the operation. We're real happy to have him back."

For everyone who knows him, the real key to Henry Corley is his dedication to doing a job well. As Paul Huggins puts it: "The job's a little harder today than it was 20 years ago. The routes are a little tougher, mail volume is up and the schedule is a little tighter. But Henry has shown us that professionalism is alive and well in the Postal Service today."■

Postal peo

ple team up

Organized intramural basketball has been a proud tradition in the Philadelphia Post Office since 1954. Today, teams such as the Panthers and the Super Suds mix with teams named for some of the city's oldest neighborhoods (Fairmount, Nicetown, etc.).

Split into day and night divisions, the Philadelphia league's 16 teams plan an 18-game schedule, followed by a playoff series and a championship game in May.

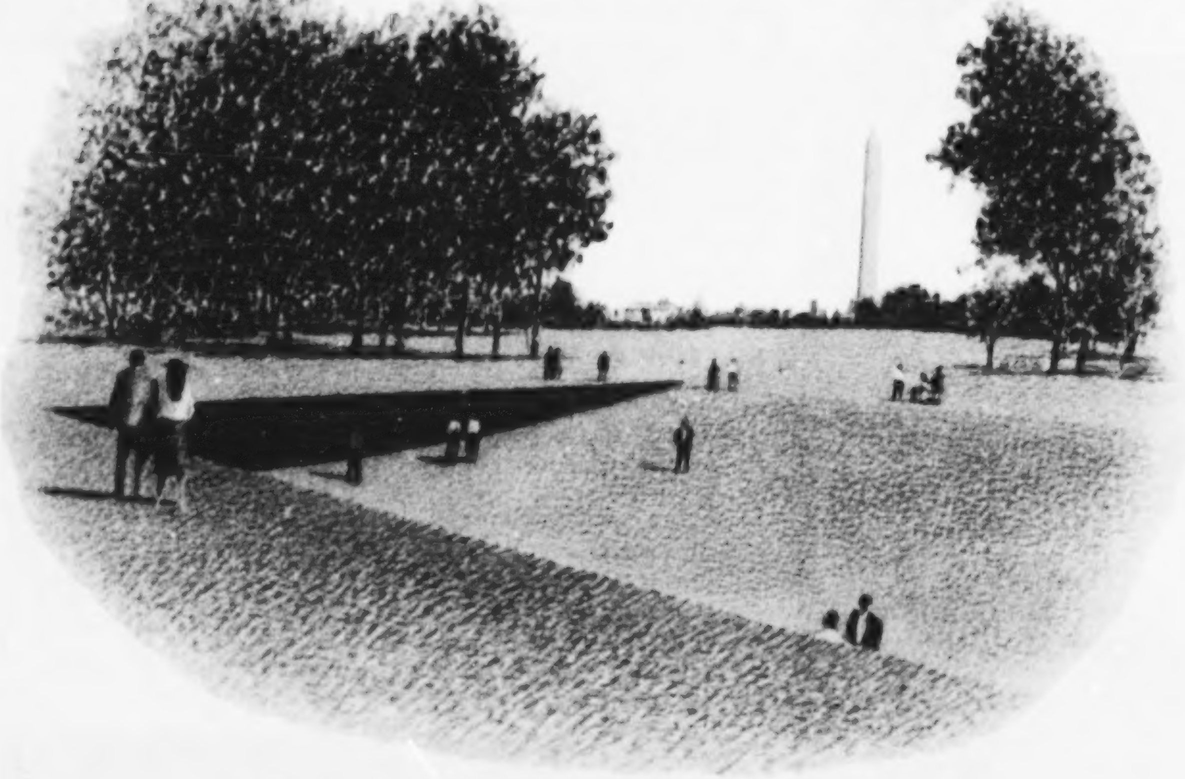
The Hawks, last year's titlewinner, again led its day-time division after a recent 111-96 victory over the War team. The team has blended MPLSM operator Melvin Coles' stylish and polished shotmaking with the school-yard, one-on-one ball-handling of Chuck Hall, also an MPLSM operator. The two scored 32 and 36 points respectively in the recent game. ■

Far left: Philadelphia's War and Hawk teams battle it out on the court. Though War scored a string of 13 straight points mid-way through the second half and whittled what had been a 19-point lead to just six, the Hawks came back to win 111-96.
Left: MPLSM operator Larry McClurkin, the War team's coach.
Below: Coach McClurkin and War team huddle to discuss strategy.

4
HANEE
44
9
SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK VITAGLIANO

Remembering those who served



A Boston mail handler campaigns to raise funds for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Brian Stanley is not by nature a joiner or an activist. But for the past 18 months, he's devoted all of his spare time to a tireless campaign for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

The Boston mail handler and former Marine has spent most of that time behind a portable typewriter, punching out letters to fellow employees and articles for postal union magazines. He's dug into his own pocket for expenses and, so far, his appeals have reached well over 23,000 postal people, and led to an unknown number of donations to the memorial.

Each one sent means that Stanley is achieving his goal: He wants to give postal employees a personal opportunity to take part in a national tribute to "the guys who went over there and fought and died."

Thanks to volunteers like Brian Stanley, the memorial is now under construction on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In 1980, Congress donated the two-acre site for the monument, with the understanding that funds for construction would be raised privately. Since then, the non-profit Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund has collected approximately $5 million of the $7 million required for construction. Groundbreaking took place March 26 and a dedication date of Nov. 11—Veteran's Day—is planned.

The memorial's design—one long wall stretching toward the Washington Monument and another toward the Lincoln Memorial—is intended to tie the service and sacrifice of the Vietnam veteran into the history of the United States.

When completed, the graceful two-level structure will be flush with the lawn of the Mall on one side; on the other side, a gentle slope will bring visitors to the point where the two walls meet, at a very wide angle, and reach a height of 10 feet.

The inner surface of the polished black granite walls will display, in chronological order, the names of the 57,692 who died in Vietnam or remain missing. A statue and a flag will also be placed in the parklike setting near the Lincoln Memorial.

Brian Stanley, who earned four purple hearts during his seven months in Vietnam, sees the memorial as a fitting commemoration of the people "who went over there with only one purpose in mind—to serve their country."

A mail handler for the past 12 years, Stanley works at the South Boston Postal Annex. Fifteen years ago, he was a raw recruit sent into action in Southeast Asia.

Thinking back to his Vietnam experience, he says, "You turned your mind off to cope with it. Maybe you exchanged names with people and promised to stay in touch when you got home, but really you turned it off...most of the guys were just faces, even the ones who died."

Now Stanley has helped to make sure that those who served will be remembered and honored.

Editor's note: Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible contribution or working with Brian Stanley, National Fundraising Chairman for U. S. Postal Employees, may write to him in care of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 111 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 308, Washington, DC 20005.■

Brian Stanley at the groundbreaking for the memorial.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK TANNER

Will the real Kenny Rogers please take a bow

It came as no surprise to his friends when Dallas, TX, letter carrier Cecil Ethridge won a look-alike contest before a recent Kenny Rogers concert in Dallas.

The surprise came on the evening of the concert.

As the country music superstar welcomed Ethridge onto the glittering, flood-lit stage, few of the 17,000 concert-goers paid more than polite attention. The entertainer chatted easily about how good it would be to have a double. Then, good naturedly springing a trap he had used before when he learned a "twin" was in the audience, Rogers asked Ethridge if he could sing.

Letter Carrier Cecil Ethridge (left) "doubled" as a singer in Dallas recently.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE KABKA

"A little," came Ethridge's nervous reply, and he volunteered to try a Rogers classic, "Reuben James."

The Grammy award winner quickly showed Ethridge some tricks of the trade—how to handle the microphone and how to move with the spotlight—and there was a sympathetic murmur from the audience as the local man grasped the mike.

But, as a smiling Rogers cued the band and turned into the blackness of the shadows, the letter carrier was getting over his jitters. When the music started, he came in on cue with the same mellow tones that had made Rogers a star, and his delivery grew more confident as he went along. Five minutes later, the song was over, the stage and auditorium lights came up, and Ethridge saw thousands of fans on their feet clapping, shouting their approval, and giving him the biggest ovation of the evening. A stunned Kenny Rogers was at his side, applauding, congratulating, and feigning dismay. "That's the last time we'll ever do that," Rogers quipped to a delighted audience.

News services sent the story of the letter carrier upstaging a star throughout the country, and it even appeared in European and Asian papers after Stars & Stripes carried an article in its international editions.

As it turns out, Ethridge had reason for his confidence during the performance. He had spent several years as a professional musician with a folk group in the 1960s, and performed for 12 years with the Dallas Civic Chorus, a polished group of community singers.

For two weeks after the stories appeared, the 15-year postal veteran found it difficult to get through his route on schedule. "People wanted to stop, say hello and congratulate me—not to mention get my autograph," says the Beverly Hills Station carrier. Ethridge is an old hand at signing autographs. He's been doing it ever since his look-alike became a star.

"Years ago in a mall, a teenaged girl asked for my autograph. I told her I wasn't Kenny, but she said, 'You're so close, give it to me anyway.' So I signed my name, and under it signed 'Kenny II.'"

With the recent publicity has come offers of singing jobs—a night at North Texas State University and a performance before the Dallas Lions Club annual banquet, the second largest Lions Club in the world. But, although he once had fleeting thoughts about a show business career, Ethridge has no plans to hang up his mailbag and carry a guitar from one city to the next.

"I enjoy singing weekends now and again," says the father of three, "but I'll never trade on my resemblance to Kenny. I really enjoy being Cecil Ethridge." ■

KEEPING POSTED

Express Mail Next Day Service acceptance times may vary for different destinations under a temporary mail classification change that went into effect March 14.

The temporary classification change permits postmasters to establish acceptance cutoff times that make better use of available scheduled airline transportation. In the past, all post offices had to accept Next Day Service shipments until 5 p.m. If airline flight schedules changed or some flights were dropped, the Postal Service had no choice but to reduce or eliminate service to destinations dependent on those flights. Now, in addition to the 5 p.m. acceptance time, postmasters may establish acceptance times which permit shipments to be dispatched on earlier flights and thus, restore service to many destinations and provide service to destinations not formerly reached. Acceptance times after 5 p.m. may also be established if overnight service can be provided.

A $500 modification for multi-position letter sorting machines has won the largest cash award in the history of the USPS Employee Suggestion Program. The $17,950 award was shared by Leonard W. Clark and Lee M. Pace of Mobile, AL. Clark is supervisor of the Mobile Management Sectional Center's computer markup unit, and Pace manages the MSC's mail processing operations. Their suggestion will reduce the amount of "flip letter" mail caused during machine sorting and is expected to save $16 million annually when implemented nationwide.

On the same subject, watch for upcoming changes in the USPS Employee Suggestion Program. The revamped program, scheduled to debut later this year, will include training for supervisors in how to evaluate suggestions more effectively. In the works also is a promotional campaign to encourage you to put your ideas to work for yourself and the USPS.

Mail acceptance employees will soon be using prenumbered, pressure sensitive labels to identify Registered Mail, instead of stamping the items and writing in a number. The change paves the way for the USPS to introduce equipment that will make it easier for registry employees to prepare dispatch bills. Currently all dispatch bills, which track the whereabouts of each registered item, are prepared manually. In the future, employees in offices that receive high volumes of registered mail will use a hand-held optical scanner that "reads" the label. The scanner is connected to a printer that automatically records the label number on a dispatch bill. Tested for six months last year in New York's Church Street Station, the equipment proved to be both faster and cheaper than the manual method. Eventually it will go into all postal facilities that dispatch 900 or more registered items a day. The first units are scheduled to go into offices in 59 cities beginning this fall. Use of the numbered labels, however, will start this summer.

A new member joined the USPS Board of Governors in April. He's John R. McKean, 51, named as a Governor of the Postal Service by President Ronald Reagan and confirmed by the Senate in March. The president of John R. McKean Certified Public Accountants, of San Francisco, he is a native of Evanston, IL. As a Governor of the Postal Service, he will participate in developing USPS policy and making final decisions on rate and classification matters.

On May 1 it will be five years since the Postal Service discontinued its extra charge for domestic Air Mail service and began flying all First-Class Mail traveling more than 600 miles. Last year, the USPS paid carriers nearly half a billion dollars to transport 1.8 billion pounds of mail by air. Although the number of flights was reduced by some 25 percent due to the air controllers' strike, there was no significant impact on mail service.

Taking stock in America has even more meaning these days when high interest rates make borrowing for homes and cars so costly. For the individual, a collection of U.S. Savings Bonds accumulated through payroll deduction can make major purchases or college tuition payments less painful. For the country, each investment in savings bonds lops a bit off the national debt—and that means less of the kind of competition for funds that is driving up interest rates. Convenience is an important feature of the Savings Bond Program. Saving is automatic, the interest you earn from this investment is exempt from state and local taxes, and if you wish, you can defer the federal income taxes on accrued interest. It all adds up to a good reason to increase your payroll deductions during the U.S. Savings Bond Campaign in May.

The 1982 health benefit "open season," postponed last November, is now scheduled for May 3 through May 28. Employees who wish to switch to a different health plan may do so during that time and the change will be effective July 10.

The Office of Personnel Management, which administers the health insurance program for federal and postal employees, says that there will be no fee for transferring from one plan to another. All or part of the deductible accumulated under a current plan will be credited toward the deductible in the new plan, according to OPM.

Postal employees are digging deeper into their pockets to help their fellow citizens. Last fall, 284,191 postal people donated a record $13.1 million to the USPS Combined Federal Campaign. That's a whopping 25 percent boost over last year's donations to the CFC. It represents an average gift of $46 to the national and local community service, charity and health organizations that help people in need.

POSTAL PERSONALITIES

Dave Neener

The objects Dave Neener carves out of wood are big—cigar-store Indians, sea captains, and eagles. The prices he gets for them are big, too. For example, Anheuser-Busch recently paid him more than $1,000 for a spread-winged "Budweiser Eagle."

That's pretty good considering that Neener, 38, only recently discovered the pleasure of woodcarving. Before that, the window clerk at the St. Petersburg, FL, Main Post Office often relaxed by refinishing furniture in his spare time. Two years ago, while doing some chipping on a table, he decided he'd like to do a little whittling and impulsively invested $400 in rosewood. Then, after enrolling in a woodcarving class at the local high school, he started bringing home other large pieces of wood and "finding" sculptures on them.

"Our back yard looks like a woodpile," says his wife, Ann. "But I don't mind because he enjoys it so much."

Some of Neener's work is displayed at the Main Sail Gallery in Madeira Beach, and lately he has been getting commissions for sculptures. In fact, he's found quite a demand for company "logos," like the request from a local firm for a Harley-Davidson eagle to hang over the entrance to its showroom.

Neener says he tries to bring to life what he sees in the wood. A tree branch sticking out may suggest the wing of a bird. Or certain contours may look like the face of a sea captain from one angle and, from another, like the limbs of an animal.

Sometimes, Neener works from photographs. "But not for the eagles," he says. "I do a lot of eagle watching and carve them from memory. There's something about their majesty that fascinates me, the expression on their faces and the fear they put into other creatures."■

To attract attention at public events, William Gerdsen dons a "beard of bees." With more than 10,000 honey bees clinging to his face and neck, he walks through the crowd daring women to kiss him.

Gerdsen uses this demonstration to show that bees can be handled safely. His larger mission is to educate the public on the importance of honey bees as an essential link in the food production chain.

"Honey bees are not vicious killers, as some people think," says the Storrs, CT, distribution clerk. "They're a boon to mankind. Unless they perform their pollination function, fruit trees and many other food-bearing plants are unable to produce. Without honey bees, our food production would be one-third less than the present level."

As chairman of United Concerned Beekeepers, Gerdsen is especially disturbed about chemical pesticides gardeners and farmers use that destroy bees along with unwanted insects. By shopping carefully, he says, it's possible to select insecticides that are known to be less toxic to honey bees when applied properly.

In the summertime, between tours at the post office where he has been a clerk since 1969, Gerdsen trucks his mobile bee display to agricultural fairs in the Northeast.

There's a trick to assembling a bee beard. Gerdsen first selects a young colony and gorges the bees with sugar syrup. After hiding the queen in a small cage under his chin, the young workers—who are attracted to the queen because she carries a chemical substance essential to their existence—can be arranged as Gerdsen pleases.

To remove the bees, he simply puts the queen back in the hive, then extracts her family with a special vacuum.

Back home at "The Bard's Farm" in Chaplin, CT (so named because Gerdsen is a Shakespeare buff), his wife and children help with the beekeeping chores. Though he sells honey, Gerdsen says he has no interest in commercial beekeeping. "We just want to make enough money to support our fascinating hobby," he says.■

William Gerdsen

The Postal Life Advisory Board welcomes two new members: James Hirayama, a letter carrier at the Hamilton Branch of the Palo Alto, CA, Post Office and Andrea Nellius, who succeeds Alan Dratell (who has left the Postal Service) as editor of Postal Life.

Hirayama joined the Postal Service in 1949 as a substitute carrier. Since then he has received many letters of commendation and appreciation, and in 1975, was named driver of the month, after receiving a safe driving award each year for eight consecutive years.

Born in San Jose in 1915, Hirayama worked as a gardener-chauffeur after graduating from high school. Then, during World War II, he was put in the Santa Anita Assembly Center before being sent to the relocation camp for Japanese-Americans in Heart Mountain, WY. "I didn't mind the camp," he says, "because I made the best of the situation by keeping busy as a timekeeper." After a year he was allowed to move to Denver, CO, where he worked in a factory making wooden boxes for gun shells, and after the war was allowed to return to California. There he went back to gardening until he saw an opportunity for more job security with the Postal Service.

In his free time, Hirayama cleans dentists' offices to pay for his hobbies—bonsai gardening and golf. "I've been playing golf for 25 years," he says, "and haven't improved much."

Nellius, a native of Miami, FL, studied journalism at the University of Florida in Gainesville. After graduating in 1961, she worked as a reporter, public information officer, and freelance writer in Florida, and as a writer-editor for an insurance firm in Washington, DC.

She joined the Postal Service in 1974 as a writer-editor and served as managing editor of Postal Leader for the last four years. In December she was appointed General Manager of the Publications Division in the Public and Employee Communications Department.

In her new position, Nellius supervises the editing and production of employee publications including Postal Life, Postal Leader, PENS (a periodical for editors of post office newsletters) and the Headquarters newsletter.■

Andrea Nellius & James Hirayama

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POSTMASTERS
When an employee moves, please remind that person to fill out PS form 1216 (Employee's Current Mailing Address) and to submit it to the personnel office in the post office where he works, making certain the employee's Social Security Number and the office's finance number are included. Do not send change to address to Postal Life.

CONTENTS

2

VIDA
FIRST PRIZE

8

16

2 **SOLVING A GROWING PROBLEM**
Houston's population explosion leads to innovative customer services improvements that will be showing up in other post offices around the country.

6 **THE REPORTS OF OUR DEATH HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED**
For more than a century experts have predicted that electronics shortly will supplant the nation's postal system. What's the outlook for the '80s?

8 **AROUND THE CRACKER BARREL**
A Georgia postmaster's tale-spinning winds up as a book.

11 **AIR-POWERED PO**
The USPS has put the wind to work in Borger, TX.

12 **WILLING AND ABLE**
People who have refused to let a handicap destroy their self esteem are back on the job in Salt Lake City and Columbia, SC.

16 **POSTAL PEOPLE TEAM UP**
Philadelphia Post Office employees are game for basketball.

18 **REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED**
A Boston mail handler helps to organize postal support for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

20 **WILL THE REAL KENNY ROGERS PLEASE STAND UP!**
Look-alike letter carrier pulls off surprise delivery to country western superstar.

21 **KEEPING POSTED**

22 **POSTAL PERSONALITIES**

ON THE COVER: An aerial perspective shows Houston growing up as well as out. Photo courtesy of the Houston Chronicle.

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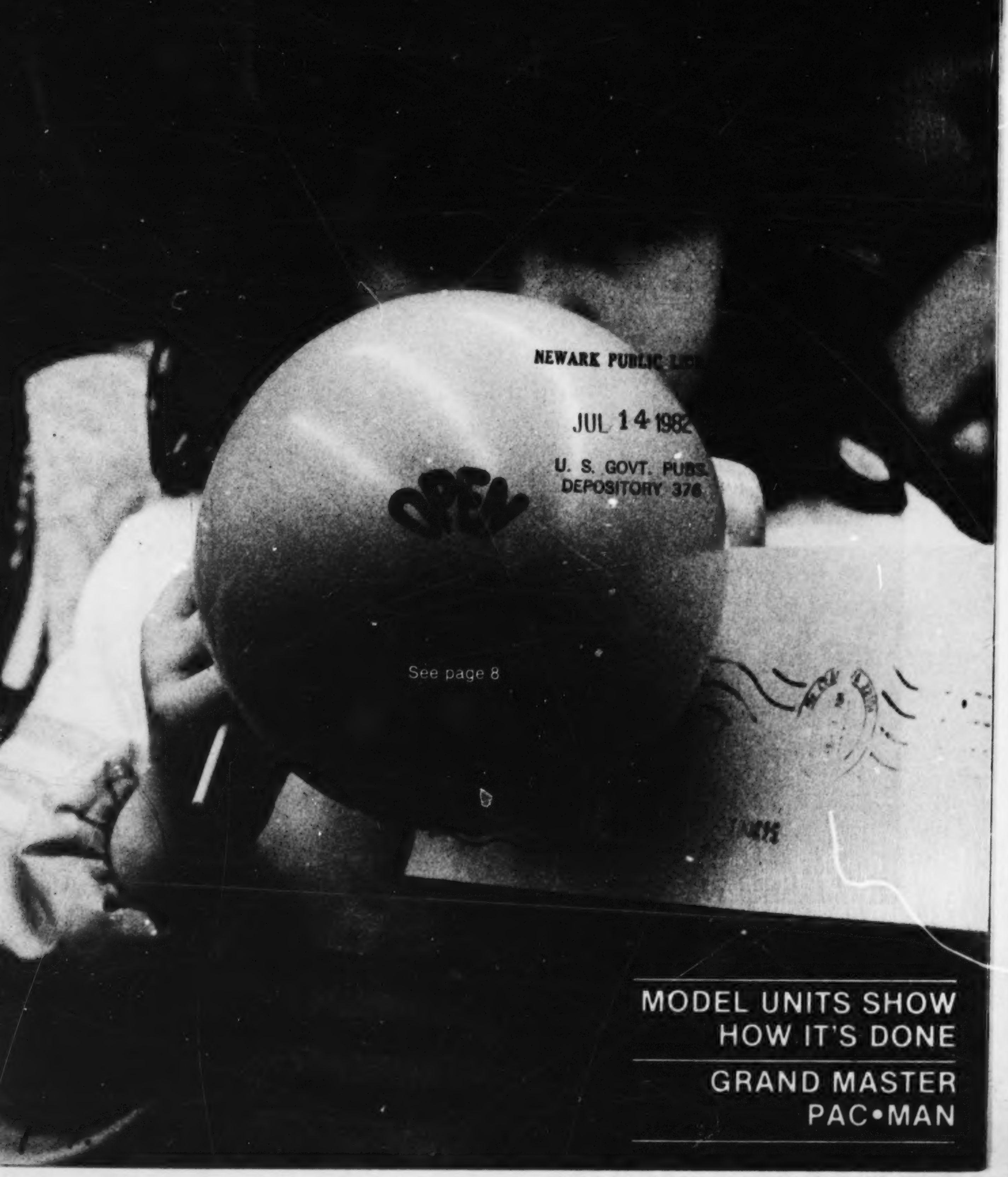

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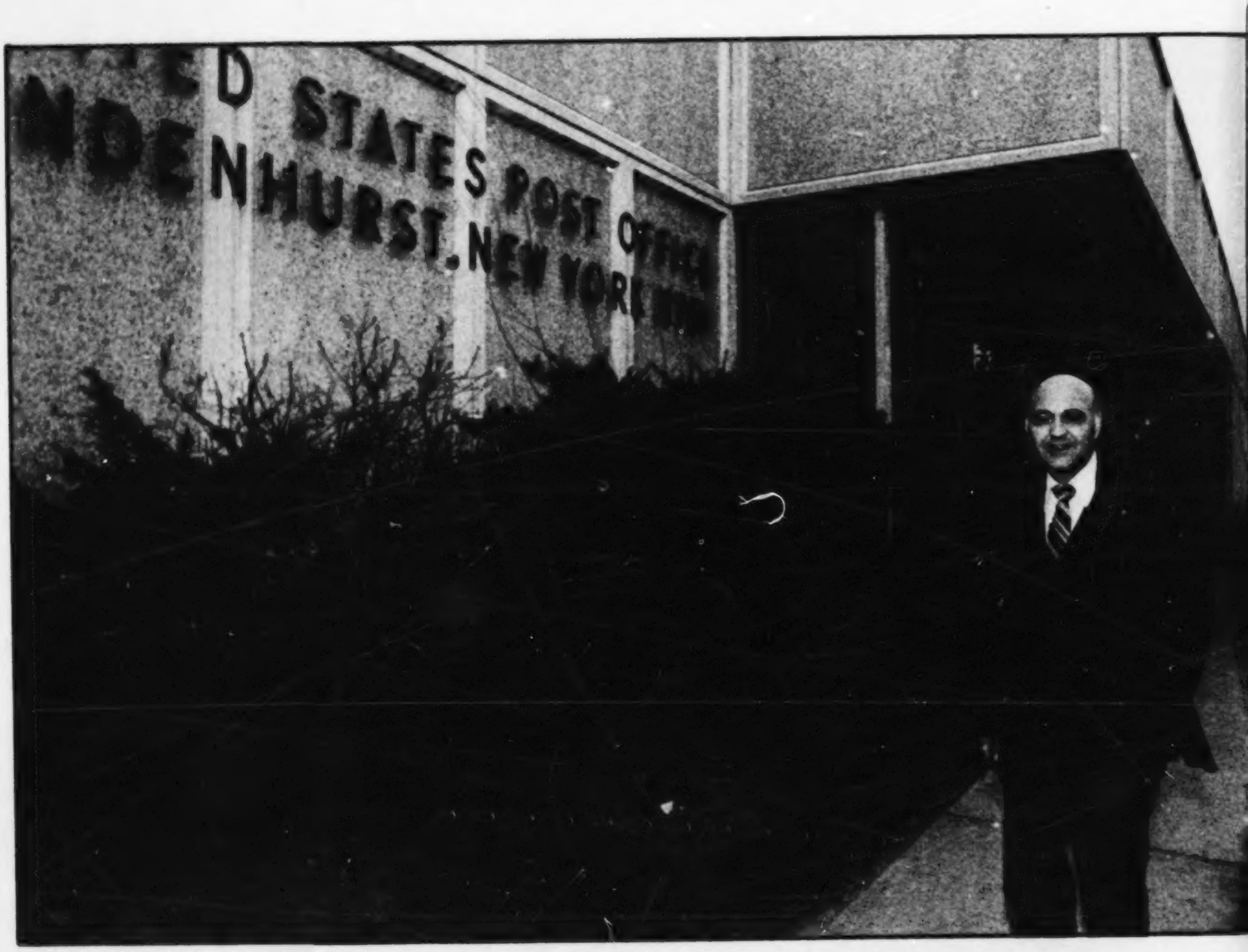
See page 8

MODEL UNITS SHOW
HOW IT'S DONE

GRAND MASTER
PAC•MAN

SHARING GOOD IDEAS

Model units show how a top-notch facility operates



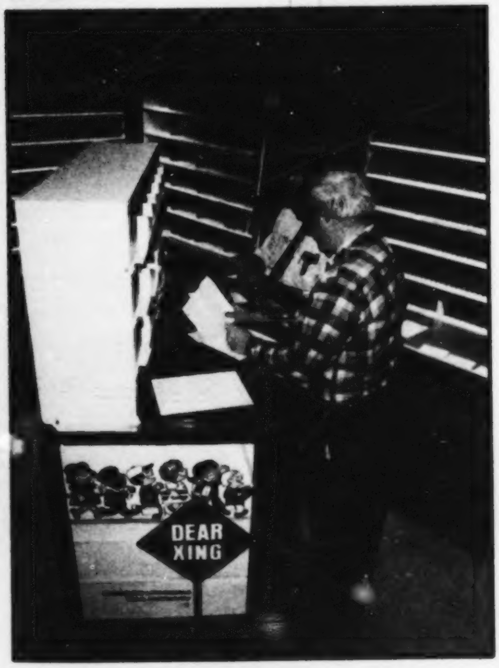
Lindenhurst Postmaster Frank Fallica: "We genuinely wanted [employees'] input. And we got a lot of good ideas."

"It's nice to be thought of as the office that does things right," says John O'Donnell, an accountable mail clerk at the Lindenhurst, NY, Post Office.

O'Donnell has reason to be proud. His facility was the first in the nation to earn the title "Model Unit" and become a showplace of ideas on how a top-notch unit should operate.

Based on the concepts that see-

Letter carrier Stanley Kata cases flats into a plastic crate bolted onto the wing of his letter case—one of the most popular innovations in the model unit program.



Each morning, John O'Donnell, in the plaid shirt, wheels a mobile unit containing accountable mail to carriers at their cases. Kata, now wearing a tie, signs for his accountable items.

ing is believing and good ideas should be shared, the program eventually will establish two model units in each of the 242 sectional centers in the country.

Thus far, only 304 facilities have met the rigorous set of objectives required for acceptance in the model class. Lindenhurst, which earned the distinction before Christmas last year, was the first in the Northeast Region, and other regional firsts were Hammond, IN, (Central), the Rockville, MD, Twinbrook Station (Eastern), the Jacksonville, FL, Arlington Station (Southern), and the Chula Vista, CA, Post Office (Western).

Once certified, each model unit becomes a learning ground for postmasters and supervisors in the surrounding area. During visits they can see in action improvements they may want to adopt in their operations.

O'Donnell, whose accountable mail operation was streamlined as part of the program, says he likes working in a model facility. "I think we all enjoy the recognition we get when visitors come to observe our operations," he says.

In Lindenhurst, teams of specialists from the Northeast Region and the Hicksville Management Sectional Center worked with Postmaster Frank Fallica and his staff in making improvements.

The office's shining service record and ideal size—87 employees, 40 carrier routes and three retail windows—made it a perfect candidate for the program which stresses improving units that are already good.

Fallica, realizing that reluctance to accept change is a part of human nature, insisted on open communications during the time it took to achieve model unit status.

Richard Kresse, representative for the local letter carriers' union, credits the smoothness of the transition that took place in Lindenhurst to a good working relationship between craft employees and management. "The postmaster and his people are very receptive to our ideas," he says. "If we've got a problem, we don't argue about it, we work it out."

Kresse says that Fallica got everyone involved right from the start. "He asked for our ideas and made us all feel a part of the project," says Kresse.

"We genuinely wanted their input," says the postmaster. "And we got a lot of good ideas."

Among them was the color coding of labels on carrier distribution cases. Each street label appears in a different color, enabling substitute carriers to case letters more efficiently. A local idea aimed at reducing accidents was painting the incoming and outgoing doors to the dock red and green on each side as a visible reminder of

continued

which door to use.

But many other changes are an integral part of the model unit program itself.

The most noticeable one involved redesigning the floor plan in the carrier area to allow expanded use of general purpose mail containers. What once had been five rows of eight carrier cases was rearranged to become a modified "U" configuration with the supervisor's desk positioned at the mouth of the "U."

Employees now roll containers of sorted flats and accountable items directly to carrier work stations instead of picking up mail from stationary distribution cases.

Another innovation involving mobile equipment is the use of containers to collect customers' "hold" mail. A general purpose mail container carrying racks of empty mail trays is placed in the carrier work area each morning. After carriers deposit "hold" mail in the labeled trays, the container is wheeled to the retail service area. There clerks can reach it easily when a customer calls for mail.

To enhance sorting operations at carrier cases, plastic crates were bolted to the wings of letter cases. They serve as convenient receptacles for flats, providing a neat method of storage and measurement that leaves the work area clean and uncluttered.

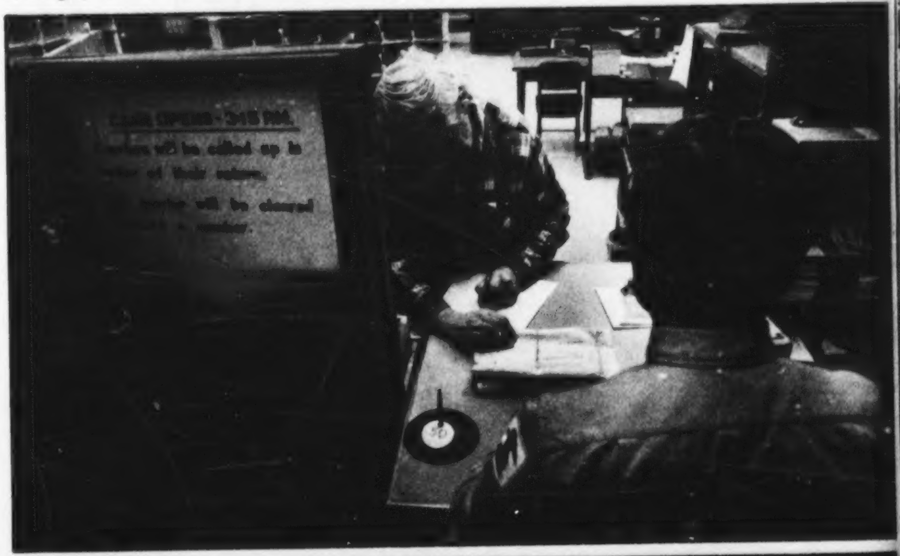
Plexiglass tops were installed on case ledges to permit carriers to slip unique route information underneath as an aid to substitutes.

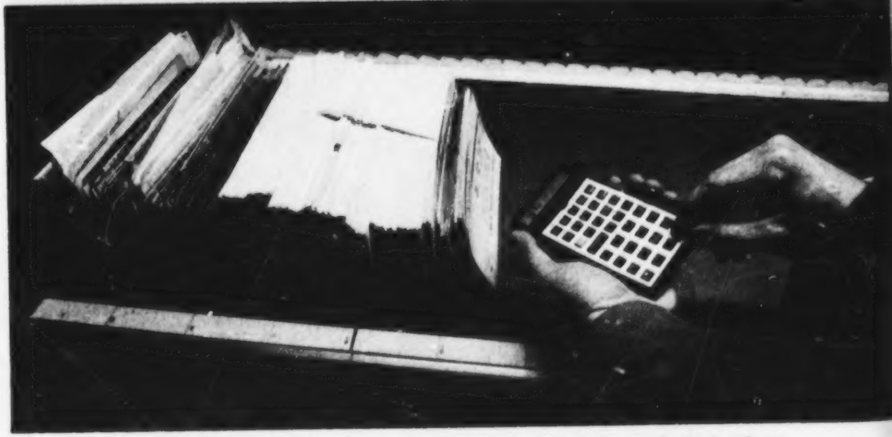
To speed the tallying of mail by supervisors, strips of tape marked in quarter-foot intervals were attached horizontally on each ledge and vertically on each flat container. Supervisors can make an instant volume determination by measuring the mail against the hatch marks. They then record the data using hand-held programmable calculators.

Another change eliminated parcel post racks. In their place are steel shelves large enough to accommmodate separations for an average day's parcels on the 40 routes. The shelf is positioned near the exit so that carriers simply pick up their parcels as they leave the office.

Retail operations also got a thorough overhaul as part of the model unit program. A new screenline now separates the retail unit from mail processing operations, and racks containing forms for special services were installed in the lobby so that customers can complete them while waiting for service. The general appearance of the lobby was spruced up, and

When they return from their deliveries, carriers in a model unit take a number instead of lining up to handle accountable mail. Here John O'Donnell checks in a returning carrier.





Strips of tape marked in quarter-foot increments on each carrier ledge allow an instant volume determination by supervisors. Programmable calculators record volume and aid in planning.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD SMOLKO

new frames for service and philatelic posters now decorate the walls.

Some changes are almost invisible to employees, such as the new filing system that standardizes the organization of reporting and data collection materials. All improvements are carefully reviewed for their impact on safety, and a reduction in accidents is a major goal of the project.

Fallica has lost count of the number of visitors since his post office achieved model unit status; he now asks them to sign a guest book. "Other managers cannot expect to take back every idea," he cautions. "Many offices simply cannot accommodate all of the techniques." But he says that most visitors leave with at least one idea they can adopt.

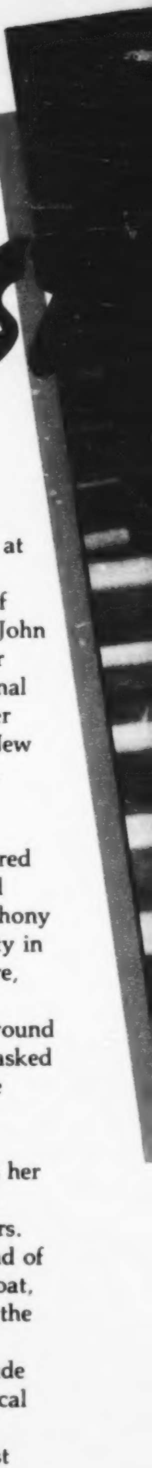
Results during the first quarter of the postal fiscal year show that the improvements at Lindenhurst are paying off in increased efficiency and—best of all—in safety. As compared to the first quarter of fiscal year 1981, the post office had 13 fewer accidents.

Fallica is quick to praise his staff and the support he received from the Hicksville Management Sectional Center, the Long Island District and the Northeast Region for bringing his unit up to model unit standards.

"There was cooperation all around," he says. "But that's what it takes to make any project a success."■ *—Richard Smolko*

Above left: Clerk Robert Sisco sorts flats into general purpose containers and then rolls and delivers the sorted items to each carrier work station. Below: The new arrangement of carrier cases provides a more open work atmosphere and permits the use of mobile units.

an engaging use of Intelpos



If their marriage wasn't actually made in heaven, it certainly came close. Ray Kemp and Sheila Lane, the "most romantic couple" in England, became engaged over the air waves via Intelpost, thereby winning a honeymoon trip to New York.

When the international mail service was launched in Bristol, England, last summer, the "romantic couple" competition was staged to publicize it.

Prospective bridegrooms in the Southwest Postal Region were invited to pop the question via Intelpost and receive instant answers from their "intendeds" in the same way. A panel of judges selected the most romantic couple.

Though the winning letters would never make it into one of Barbara Cartland's romantic novels, they satisfied the judges who, no doubt, were keeping in mind the purpose of the contest.

Ray's letter to Sheila was perhaps colored by the fact that he once worked a year as a letter carrier:

"I woke up this morning and had something very important I wanted to ask you. It was so important it couldn't even wait for the first-class post. So instead, by courtesy of the marvels of modern technology, I'm popping you a question with a speed faster than even a telegram could get to you. I just hope my idea meets with your stamp of approval. I want to tie up your heart strings and seal them with a knot of love forever. Please will you marry me? I'd appreciate a reply poste-haste. If you accept I'll give you a ring later."

Sheila's reply also carried the postal motif:

"Your suggestion would make even Buzby's [the British postal insignia] feathers flutter just a little. The speed of your proposal is impressive. But even if you'd sent it second-class post my reply would have been just the same. With Cupid's arrow fired so promptly through Intelpost, correctly and clearly addressed to the postage of my heart, how could I say no."

The happy lovers were married in April at a traditional wedding with three bridesmaids in the bride's hometown of Plymouth. Two days later they flew to New York, compliments of British Airways and a local travel agency.

U.S. postal officials met them at Kennedy International Airport during a fog as thick as pea soup—"just a little something we thought up to make them feel at home," joked Robert Siebert, Northeast Regional Director of Planning. Siebert, along with John Mulligan, Regional Postmaster General; Louis Delmas, Regional Program Manager of Customer Services; and James Dennis, New York District Director of Customer Services, made up the welcoming committee.

The honeymoon couple toured the New York Post Office and were greeted by Manager Anthony Argento at the Intelpost facility in the World Trade Center. There, they sent messages home to England, and against a background of Love stamp replicas, were asked by reporters to act out a more traditional marriage proposal.

"At last I have him on his knees," exclaimed the bride as her husband knelt with arms outstretched for the photographers. Later, the pair toured the island of Manhattan on a Circle Line boat, enjoyed a delightful dinner at the "Windows on the World" restaurant atop the World Trade Center, and attended the musical "Annie."

So far, no romantic Intelpost proposals have been reported in the U.S. Unlike the United

Britons Ray Kemp, a television reporter, and Sheila Lane, a secretary, celebrate their winning of a "most romantic couple" contest.

Kingdom—where 56 post offices are equipped to correspond electronically with one another (as well as with Canada, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the U.S.) through a London service center—the U.S. currently has only two service centers (Washington, DC, and New York). Postal Service plans call for the opening of three more service centers this year.

Businesses use the USPS service exclusively for commercial correspondence. For example, a car dealer in Ardmore, PA, mails parts orders to the Intelpost center in Washington, where a facsimile is transmitted electronically in just seconds to London. A hard copy of the order is then mailed to its final address in Great Britain. The dealer estimates this method of ordering saves him two or three weeks of shipping time. The cost of one page of copy (text or non-text) is $5 plus Express Mail or Special Delivery charges. Postage for hard copy delivered through regular mail channels is included in the $5 fee.

An example of non-text copy—charts, graphs and the like—was the page of music sent by pianist Liberace from London to his agent in New York by Intelpost. ■ *—Catherine Courtney*

OPEN HOUSE

BRING THE FAMILY

The-place-where-daddy-works fascinated John and Priscilla, youngsters belonging to mail handler Steve Hess and his wife Amanda.

Booklets describing the Northern Virginia facility's operations were distributed by Dorothy Brodowski, a general clerk in Customer Services.

When employees at the Northern Virginia Management Sectional Center celebrated the facility's 10th birthday, more than 1,500 friends, relatives and neighbors showed up to help.

An open house scheduled for a Thursday—from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m to 7 p.m.—gave the visitors a good opportunity to see the sectional center in action.

While some of the facility's 1,700 employees channeled the mailstream through the equipment (which includes seven Mark II

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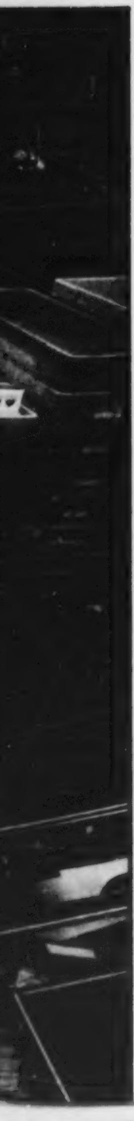
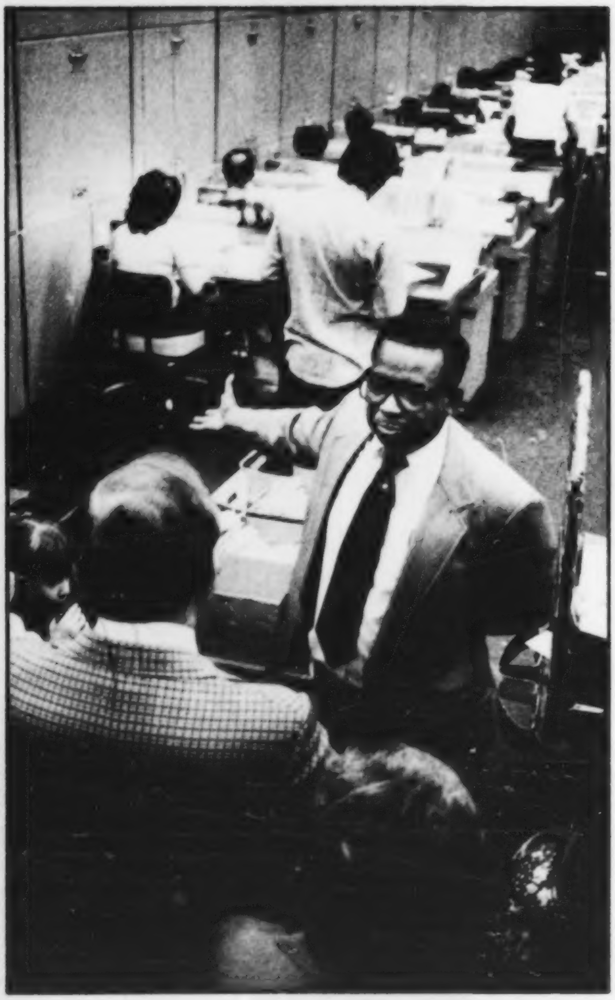




Far left: The Mark II facer-canceler was a crowd pleaser. Left: LSM supervisor Jim Burrow explains operations of the "ZIP Code machine," as one visitor termed it. The Northern Virginia facility has seven letter-sorting machines. Above: Winchester, VA, superintendent of mails Bill Peffer found the open house an opportunity to tour his sectional center facility. With him and another visitor are mail handler Robert J. Boutte, their guide.

Photographs by Patrick S. McCabe

facer-cancelers and seven letter-sorting machines) others greeted visitors, passed out a booklet describing the sectional center and sorted the guests into groups of 25.

Then came 45-minute escorted tours of the 10-acre building in Merrifield, VA, where 3.5 million pieces of mail are processed daily.

"I was really impressed by the bigness of it all," declared Janet Ford of Troop 214, one of the three Brownie groups on hand for the event. "Usually you just think of a post office up front where they sell stamps."

Even family members got a surprise. Pauline Sizer, grandmother of ZIP mail translator operator Charles Sizer: "It's great, I'll tell you that. It's much bigger than I thought. I never realized there was so much to getting a letter." After their tour, the visitors were invited to sit down in the swing room and enjoy soda, coffee, potato chips, pretzels, lollipops and balloons.

Charles Ward, who was officer-in-charge when the anniversary took place March 18, says that more than a month of preparation went into the event. "But," he adds, "the time and effort was miniscule compared to the results."

Newly appointed Sectional Center Manager Gerald F. Merna adds that tours are available—usually once or twice a month between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.—for anyone interested in seeing how mail is processed. ■

A chance to crank a vintage canceling machine and refreshments highlighted the 45-minute tours offered during the open house. More than 1,500 people visited the sectional center facility.

Video game champ 'trained' on letter sorting machine

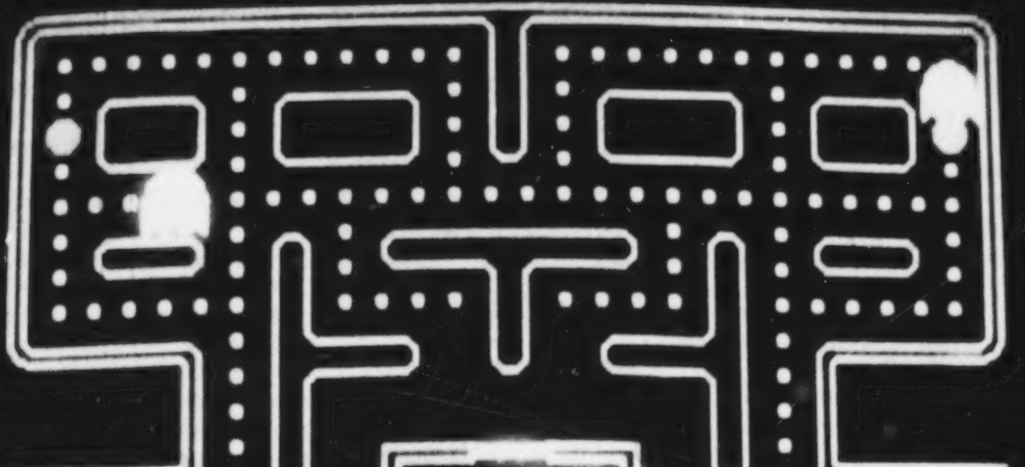
On May 10, Will Kornfeind plunked two-bits into a Pac-Man machine, arranged his lanky frame on a stool in front of the video game cabinet, punched the single-player button and began running the maze. Six-and-a-half hours later, after breaking his own record for the second time, he walked away a world champion.

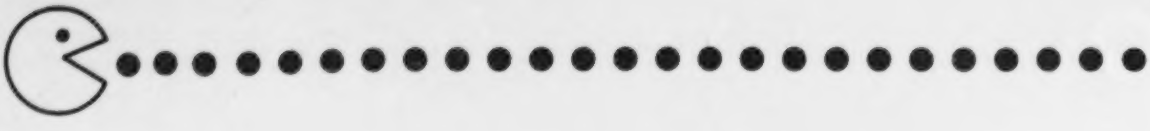
Pac-Man, like Space Invaders, is a game that no one really wins. It can swallow quarters faster than the Pac-Man figure can gobble up white dots.

But Kornfeind, 34, a relief window clerk in Spokane, WA, has come the closest of any player so far to beating the machine. During his most recent try for a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records, he scored 3.1 million points in 249 rounds on a single quarter.

How? The 11-year postal veteran tells all in a book he's just finished, tentatively titled "Pac-Man Survivalist Manual." It's now being reviewed by publishers.

Basically, however, he says that prowess at the game depends on determination, the same kind of





attitude that helped him succeed as a multi-position-letter-sorting machine operator.

When he worked the MPLSM, Kornfeind won the Spokane record for the most consecutive perfect edits (random checks to see whether 100 letters are sorted to the proper bins in the machine). He keyed outgoing mail with 100-percent accuracy during 29 successive edits, from September 20, 1977, to June 13, 1978, and earned a $250 incentive award.

The challenge of Pac-Man's "infinite detail" was his incentive for setting out to beat the game in February 1981. "I was fascinated by the maze concept," he says. "The shoot 'em up games never appealed to me. My days off are Sunday and Monday, and every Monday I'd go in and drop a roll of quarters in less than an hour's time. After a few weeks, I began to notice that when I ran in a certain direction, the monsters would always react in the same way."

Looking back, the 6-foot-8-inch clerk figures he slipped about $400 into the money slot on the machines at the Players and Spectators Restaurant while learning to run the maze.

After he found safe paths through the initial rounds (symbolized by various kinds of fruit and, finally, keys), it took Kornfeind several months to develop a strategy for the ultimate round—the ninth key. (Note to Pac-Man fans: There is no gold bar.)

By January, he had cracked a million points and begun scoring in the 2 million range. In March he hit 2.7 million, which the Guinness Book of World Records publishers had told him was a world record; he reached 2.9 million in April. Then, during an epic day of play captured on videotape—a Guinness requirement if he wants to appear in the new video game category planned for the book—he broke his own record with 3,127,240 points.

The 6-foot-8-inch Spokane window clerk is working toward a Guinness World Record title.

In the meantime, Kornfeind had come up with the idea of sharing the techniques he'd discovered—through "the most in-depth, comprehensive book" on the market. To test whether he could teach the skills, he used Spokane mail processing supervisor Brent Whicker as a guinea pig. In about four months, he brought Whicker from a high score of 30,000 to a recent total of 1,080,180 points. "I'm really proud of him," says his mentor, who had to break Whicker of some bad "driving" habits before teaching him safe pathways through the maze.

Kornfeind says the idea of beating the unbeatable was what drove him to spend so much time on the game. He attributes his success to an ability to harness his mental energy rather than an inclination toward mathematics or engineering. "English was the course I liked best in school," he says. "And the thing I've always had in the back of my mind was to write a book. I'm not particularly intelligent; I guess I have a high metabolic rate. My mind works at high speed and I'm able to call on a reserve of energy when I want to overcome a challenge.

"It requires tremendous mental self discipline to be successful over a machine, whether it's an MPLSM or Pac-Man. When I was an MPLSM operator, to make the job more interesting, I built a challenge into it."

Kornfeind made 100-percent accuracy his goal as an MPLSM operator, a job he loved. "I'd still be doing it if they ran machines during the day." His challenge as a window clerk, he says, is 100-percent courtesy. "I try to put myself in the customer's place and be understanding. I think of the economic times we live in, and that people are having a hard time and I have a good job. I try to be as courteous as possible."

The Postal Service has been Kornfeind's entire career. He began as a carrier in Melrose Park, IL; Lansing, IL; and Gary, IN, leaving the USPS twice to attend college, and getting reinstated. Then he moved to Spokane and again was reinstated seven-and-a-half years ago.

In some ways, he admits, he's looking forward to losing his enthusiasm for Pac-Man. "There are other things in life," he says. But handling a Rubic's Cube isn't one of them. "I'll never pick one up," he vows. "I know what would happen."■ *—Andrea Nellius*

Photograph by Lorinda Girault

it pays to save

Larry Brouse is looking forward to the future now—a secure one for his granddaughter, Elizabeth.

Photograph by Scott Budny

BMC clerk Robert Hess has paid cash for a brand new car and trips to exotic places thanks to U.S. Savings Bonds. Ray Roberts used a four-year accumulation of bonds as a down payment on his first home. And PAR counselor Larry Brouse is using savings bonds to repay a debt of love.

* * * *

His 1968 Chevrolet station wagon had given him more than 128,000 dependable miles. But the price of filling its gas tank was climbing steadily and the possibility of a breakdown on the 15½ mile drive to work was a growing threat.

"I decided this was the proverbial rainy day I had been saving for," says Robert Hess, a PS-4 office mail clerk at the Los Angeles Bulk Mail Center, "so in 1980 I paid $7,100 for a new, energy-efficient Toyota Celica station wagon."

Hess paid cash for the new car, using some of his U.S. Savings Bonds. He started buying bonds in 1966 through the payroll savings plan. Over the years he added his pay increases to his original $25 authorization and now puts $150 into bonds each pay period.

"I like the feeling that there is ready cash if I need it," says Hess. "Instead of paying bills plus interest, I'm paying myself—and earning interest."

His saving habits have also helped him indulge his love of travel. Since 1979, he has traveled all over Europe and, this year, plans to visit Egypt or the Iberian Peninsula.

"Do I still put money into savings bonds?" says Hess. "You must be kidding; of course I do. And the old Chevy—well, I'm attached to it. I use it for heavy duty hauling and to take my three dogs to the park. Like an old horse, it deserves a green pasture. I give us both a treat by driving it to work once a week."

* * * *

When Ray Roberts left the Navy, he and his wife moved into their own home—thanks to U.S. Savings Bonds.

"I signed up for bonds while still in boot camp," he says, "to help our unit beat out the others in competing for the most bonds sold. They were sent to my parents' home in Colorado, and I just forgot about them."

continued

In 1968, Roberts married his high school sweetheart, Candance. A year later their son, Jason, was born and a year after that their daughter, Holly. When they returned to civilian life in 1971, Roberts went back to his job as letter carrier at the Denver Post Office where he had worked for a year before joining the Navy. But the family needed a place to live.

"It was my mother who came to the rescue," says Roberts. "She said, 'What about those bonds we've been receiving through the mail?' And that's how we came up with a $2,000 down payment for our first house."

His bonds also came in handy when Roberts went back to school part-time at the University of Colorado. The Veterans Administration paid his tuition, but if he needed a special book or there was some other unanticipated expense, "it was back to the bonds cache." He graduated in 1976.

Roberts, now a buildings management assistant, has sold his first house and bought another, but his habit of saving through the payroll deduction plan continues.

"It's such a convenient way to save and to have extra money available at the same time," he says. "When we pack for a trip, for example, we put a few bonds in our luggage—they can be cashed anywhere in the United States—for back-up money. If they're not cashed, which is usually the case, we just file them away with the others and let them accumulate."

* * * *

The years of neglect his children suffered as a result of his drinking are painful memories for Larry Brouse. But he intends to provide a better life for his 4-year-old granddaughter, Elizabeth. By the time she is 18, Brouse plans to guarantee that her college tuition will be paid with the U.S. Savings Bonds he buys through the payroll deduction plan.

Brouse, 56, joined the Postal Service as a clerk in the Englewood, CO, Post Office in 1968. "Before then," he says, "I worked here and there—mostly I was a practicing alcoholic."

His postal job changed all that. When Brouse learned about the Program for Alcoholic Recovery shortly after being hired, he viewed it as a chance for salvation. "I entered PAR through the front door," he says proudly. "I didn't have to be referred."

After three years of sobriety, Brouse became a PAR counseler and, in 1980, was named PAR coordinator in Denver. With the help of three counselors, he now aids employees in the Colorado and Wyoming area.

Despite their previous tribulations, Brouse and his wife, Norma, have reason to be proud of their three children. Larry, 28, is a successful businessman; Geraldine, 25, the mother of Elizabeth, is a nurse; and Patricia, 24, is a letter carrier.

"My main purpose in buying bonds for my granddaughter is to give her a measure of security. And I suppose I'm also making amends, in a small way, for the years I wasted drinking." ■

—Catherine Courtney

Above: When Ray Roberts and family leave their Denver, CO, home for a vacation, savings bonds become their "U.S. travelers checks." Left: The savings bond deduction route brought Robert Hess from Los Angeles to the foot of the steps at Dracula's Castle in Transylvania.

Photograph by Scott Bud

Photograph by Mel Short

When Pete Kellam drives his Jeep these days, he remembers to close the door.

He didn't always follow this procedure, and as a result the 33-year-old carrier out of the Pleasant Grove Station in southeast Dallas, TX, lost part of his right foot in a vehicle accident.

It was a day Kellam will never forget—Jan. 19, 1976—when he became one of 1,944 postal people injured in vehicle accidents that year (fiscal '76). His accident was one of 11,211 in the Postal Service.

"It had rained just a little bit that day," Kellam recalls. "There's an S-curve on my route I've gone around a thousand times. As I rounded the corner, I stepped on the accelerator. The Jeep hesitated and then lurched, and then the back end broke loose. I oversteered into the skid and the vehicle came to a stop and turned over on its side."

In fiscal '77 it cost the Postal Service $6,560,350 to repair vehicles that had been in accidents. It cost 37 cents worth of paint to fix Kellam's Jeep, but for the carrier the personal repair was more costly.

"I had my seat belt on but my door was open. As the vehicle was turning over (on its side), I felt my head was going over. I was leaning out. My right foot got trapped between the ground and Jeep."

Somehow Kellam freed his foot and got out of the vehicle himself through the rear door. "I saw leaking gasoline. I pulled out the mail and then looked down and saw my foot was ballooning up. I pulled off my shoe and saw blood."

Eventually, Kellam lost his big toe and the toe next to it as well as part of the ball of his right foot, and after 16 days in the hospital he spent seven months at home recuperating.

When he returned to work, he tried carrying again, but had problems. "The fancy shoes that had been made up for me were giving me problems, and I had to go on limited duty."

The 12-year postal veteran spent the next two years working at other postal jobs. He was assigned to the accounting shop for a year and then to Express Mail.

"But I wanted to get back to carrying," he says. "There's a bit of a stigma when you're on limited duty even though I think I carried my weight in those jobs. I love carrying the mail. You have a lot of freedom out there. You get to meet people and help dispel some of the bad publicity the post office gets by showing people you care about their mail."

By finding shoes that fit properly and paying closer attention to what he's doing when he's on his feet, Kellam was able to return to carrying the mail.

Troy Fletcher, manager of station operations at Pleasant Grove, says, "This man is amazing. I wish I had 20 like him. The people on his route were really happy to see him back. He's the kind of individual everybody likes."

Each day, Kellam goes around the same curve where the accident occurred, "but," he says, "you can bet my door is closed now." ■

Nancy Drattell

A PROMISE KEPT

New Orleans distribution clerk raises $1,000 a year for sickle cell anemia

With a will to give that exceeds her financial means, Christine Nogess has found an ingenious way of meeting her personal pledge to help sufferers of sickle cell anemia with a $1,000 annual contribution.

Watching a telethon to raise funds for sickle cell research and treatment five years ago, the New Orleans distribution clerk made a $50 on-the-spot contribution and promised herself she would give that much each successive year. But the very next year, she found herself able to spare only $10.

That's when she started looking for a new way to get the money she needed to fulfill her promise to herself. What she found has enabled her not only to keep her original pledge, but to multiply it 20 times.

In each of the last three years, Nogess has contributed $1,000 to the program for treatment of sickle cell victims at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. The money is the product of her own labor: Nogess crochets pin-on ornaments symbolic of various holidays—black cats and jack o'lanterns for Halloween, bells and Santas for Christmas, hearts for Valentine's Day, and roses for Mother's Day, to name but a sampling—and sells them for 50 cents apiece. Thus, to raise the $1,000 a year she is now committed to giving, Nogess hand-manufactures twice that number of ornaments.

"I make them while I'm watching television," she explains. "I like to watch, but I hate to think of time being wasted. So I'll sit down and crochet while I'm watching, and that way the time's not really wasted."

Though Nogess prefers to work behind-the-scenes, she is occasionally persuaded to make television appearances she hopes will inspire similar undertakings.

"I don't expect everyone to raise as much money as I do—it's so easy for me working at the post office, where it's like being part of a big family and everyone is eager to help—but I do think there are others who could do something along these lines," she says.

In fact, Nogess does come from a postal family. Her father, uncle and son all have worked as letter carriers and she herself is a 17-year postal veteran. She worked for 12 years as a multi-position-letter-sorting-machine operator. "I loved it and thought I'd be on the machine for the rest of my life, but then because of arthritis I couldn't

Photograph by Patrick S. McCabe

To honor her pledge, Christine Nogess crochets 2,000 lapel ornaments a year.

Photograph by Stewart Amstutz

keep up any longer." For the last three years, she has been a full-time distribution clerk in the main post office in New Orleans.

When Nogess recently made a television appearance on a local talk show, a major concern was remembering her fellow postal workers. "I was very nervous," she says, "but the one thing I didn't want to forget was to thank everyone in the post office. I asked the emcee to remind me, in case my nervousness made me forget. And though I don't recall doing it, I asked people at work the next day and they told me I had remembered."

Though no members of Nogess' immediate family suffer from sickle cell anemia, she has had first-hand experience with what it means to live with the disease through contact with the two afflicted sons of a close friend.

"There is no cure for the disease as yet," she says. "But the money I help raise for the program at Charity Hospital enables victims to get treatment between sickling crises, so when one occurs it may not be too bad. Before this program was instituted, many of the patients were unable to get this treatment because they can't afford to pay for it and don't qualify for government programs like Medicaid."

Sickle cell anemia is an inherited trait that is carried by an estimated eight percent of the American black population (it afflicts blacks almost exclusively). The disease derives its name from the changes it causes in the shape of red blood cells during the crisis periods.

At these times, normally round red blood cells assume a crescent or sickle shape that impairs their ability to perform the essential life function of carrying oxygen through the bloodstream. Sickling crises are extremely painful and can cause neurological, kidney and other related problems. The disease is often fatal at an early age. At present, the only treatment consists of measures that can moderate the intensity of the disease, such as transfusions of blood or water. ■

—*Barbara Moldauer*

THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE: DINOSAUR OR DYNAMIC CARRIER

Attorney Robert Posch Jr. writes a monthly column for Direct Marketing magazine. In a recent column he examined the Private Express Statutes and presented his views on why they remain essential to the nation. His article is reprinted with permission.

Are the Private Express Statutes necessary to the financial health of the USPS or does such monopoly grant actually hinder the Service? The latter is the thrust of the..."Private Mail Carriage Act of 1981." This bill would expressly permit the carriage of mail by private express or carrier for compensation, therefore, ending the traditional monopoly held by the USPS over First-Class Mail.

Everyone knows changes are coming. The USPS is the oldest communications infrastructure in the United States. Is it now "that overworked, malfunctioning classically Second Wave Institition" as described by Alvin Toffler?* Or, more hopefully, does the USPS owe its longevity to its own dynamism in growing with our nation through its various commercial epochs? [The proposed] legislation presents a useful starting point in examining the Private Express Statutes, an integral part of the financial health of the USPS. To best review this...debate which will affect the financial survival of all direct marketers in the next 10 to 15 years, we shall:

(a) state the law on point;
(b) review why it's there;
(c) examine whether it should stay there; and
(d) comment on the future of the USPS in general.

The Law

First, the text of 18 USCS§ 1696 is as follows:

1696. PRIVATE EXPRESS FOR LETTERS AND PACKETS.

(a) Whoever establishes any private express for the conveyance of letters or packets, or in any manner causes or provides for the conveyance of the same by regular trips or at stated periods over any post route which is or may be established by law, or from any city, town, or place to any other city, town or place, between which the mail is regularly carried, shall be fined not more than $500 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

This section shall not prohibit any person from receiving and delivering to the nearest post office, postal car, or other authorized depository for mail matter any mail matter properly stamped.

(b) Whoever transmits by private express or other unlawful means, or delivers to any agent thereof, or deposits at any appointed place, for the

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**Author of "Future Shock" and "The Third Wave."*

purpose of being so transmitted any letter or packet, shall be fined not more than $50.

(c) This chapter (§§1691 to 1734) shall not prohibit the conveyance or transmission of letters or packets by private hands without compensation, or by special messenger employed for the particular occasion only. Whenever more than 25 such letters or packets are conveyed or transmitted by such special messenger, the requirements of section 500 of Title 39, shall be observed as to each piece.

There it is. Now, how did it begin and why?

Origins of the Law

In 1692, far removed from our electronic age (Ben Franklin hadn't even flown his kite yet), a Mr. Thomas Neale was granted a 21-year royal patent to operate the colonial postal service. Mr. Neale began one tradition immediately—he lost money! In 1707, the British postmaster general purchased the colonial operation for 1,664 pounds.

After years of lackluster management, Benjamin Franklin was appointed postmaster general in 1753. Within eight years, he was showing a profit! However, his success was short-lived and eventually lost in the Stamp Act controversy (1765). Then a war was fought resulting in new management for the post office.

By 1782, Yorktown was won and the Continental Congress adopted a postal monopoly, specifically (emphasis my own):

"The Postmaster General of these United States for the time being, and his deputy and deputies, thereunto by him sufficiently authorised [sic], and his and their agents, post-riders, expresses and messengers respectively, *and no other person whatsoever*, shall have the receiving, taking up, ordering, despatching [sic], sending post or speed, carrying and delivering of any *letters, packets or other despatches* [sic] from any place within these United States for hire, reward, or other profit or advantage..."

This monopoly principle was written into the Constitution in Article I, Section 8 which provides, among other things, that Congress shall have the power to establish post offices and post roads and to make all laws necessary for carrying into execution that order. In [a] November 2, 1981 address introducing U.S. S.B. 1801, [it was] argued that:

"Section 8, Article I of our Constitution merely states that the Congress shall have power to establish post offices and post roads. It is not stated how Congress may establish postal service, much less dictate a government monopoly."

There is no doubt the language of Section 8 is vague. However, it should be noted that despite such vague language the framers and populace of the time (otherwise jealous of powers granted the national government) acquiesced to this clause with no acrimony whatsoever—in fact, with virtually no debate at all!

The current USCS §1696 was "born" in 1845. Senator William Merrick of Maryland feared for the financial health of the post office which was gradually being eroded by various private expresses. The 1845 act marked the first time in U.S. postal evolution that Congress employed the term "private express" in describing the activities of private companies which were carrying such items for compensation.

Under the 1845 statute, the monopoly covered "letters, packets or packages of letters, *or other matter properly transmittable in the U.S. mail*, except newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and periodicals." This language might well be construed as encompassing all commercial information.

To date this monopoly has survived various Congressional attempts at Congressional repeal as well as court challenges. For the record, such monopoly has been shown to encompass advertising circulars addressed to particular persons or locations but not merchandise.

Dubious Independence

In an effort to eliminate political influence over the Postal Service, Congress abolished the post office as a cabinet-level department in 1970 and replaced it with a quasi-independent corporation, the current USPS. At that time, Congress ordered the Governors of the USPS to undertake a thorough reevalution of the monopoly. By 1973, this study was completed—though regulations were changed in 1979 to allow private delivery of "extremely urgent" mail.

The 11 years that followed showed laudatory improvements. This labor-intensive service (approximately 85 percent of operating costs) reduced its payroll by 75,000 while increasing its overall volume of business. The USPS was forced to raise significant amounts of capital for modernization—modernization long neglected by the former Post Office Department.

This made its overall expenditure volume compare unfavorably to its mail volume, particularly in the short-run. Then there was OPEC which forced dramatic increases in the fuel budget on the USPS, one of the nation's largest users of fuel.

The whole operation was shrouded with the myth of "in-

continued

dependence." No independent firm is forced to retain unprofitable branches in remote areas, incur mandated minimum days to be open or set uniform rates. An example of the whole political domination is the ZIP+4 issue. A private corporation would be allowed to risk innovation. The USPS has Congress on its back on every step of the process.

Other examples of dubious artificial market conditions sought to be placed on the USPS for solely political reasons (which no private firm would be hampered with) include—just since 1978:

(a) Carter's "Citizen's Rate" for First-Class Mail. As this magazine reported at the time, "Certainly the proposed 13¢ Citizen's Rate for First-Class Mail that Mr. Carter shoved down Mr. Bailar's throat was not a business decision. It was a political sop."

(b) Then there are others which include (but are not limited to):

H.R. 3183—to authorize "free" unrestricted citizen mailing of all letter mail to the President, Vice President and all members of Congress.

H.R. 4761—force USPS to use Amtrak.

H.R. 7225—mandate door delivery of mail to physically handicapped regardless of delivery system in place (i.e. rural pickup, cluster boxes, etc.).

H.R. 2805—prohibition of using its own funds to implement or even advertise ZIP+4.

H.R. 3255—permit non-profit health clinics receiving federal financial assistance to mail "free" of charge.

Etc., etc., etc.

Fortunately, none of the above legislation has passed to date. No one would expect Emery Air Freight or Federal Express to be forced to "compete" under similar rules (and threats of others) that the USPS routinely must handle, and, yes, amazingly master!

The reason the...bill (U.S. S.B. 1801) must be rejected outright (regardless of your favorable disposition to free market competition) is that it is merely another effort to hamper the USPS. The USPS has two competitive advantages at present: significant advantages at state/federal level and the Private Express Statutes. Eliminating one of these advantages without granting the [Postal Service] free-market discretion as to five-days-a-week delivery, closing some rural post offices, etc., is simply another nail in the coffin of an indispensable system of national commerce and unity.

Future Optimism

The future belongs to the well-managed, technologies-proficient firms. As to the former, the USPS has a competitive advantage in the person of William Bolger (only second career postal employee to become Postmaster General). The late Washington Star put it best, "Bolger Has Generally Mastered the Mails."

As to technologically proficient, we shall see. However, I'm optimistic about USPS's future for the following reasons:

1. The Electronic Computer Originated Mail Service designed to provide two-day First-Class Mail delivery of messages anywhere in the U.S. is in its infancy. However, it shows USPS is attempting to enter the electronic age in a manner which will still cover every ZIP Code (a service no competitor can match).

2. The USPS's competitors have to date been few and each has been able to select a chosen (not mandated) market and pricing structure. However, the jury is still out on how well these firms will survive a shake-out as various other firms compete against them for their select segments, e.g., the potential of United Airlines going head-to-head with Federal Express.

3. The USPS has significant tax advantages it can capitalize on. Further, subsidies will be forthcoming beyond a certain point—

(a) some entity will still be needed to serve the national purpose in delivering the residue of hard-to-deliver mail private carriers shun; and

(b) simply as a matter of national defense. No private communications system reaches (or desires to reach) every hamlet of America. This reach isn't merely a symbolic presence but affects national security. Where does the government expect its men to register for the draft in 1982? What other institution could begin to take on a similar function?

4. Telecommunications will be the basis of many business transactions and some personal transactions in the coming decade. However, much of this business will be in addition to and not merely replacement. This analogy is similar to the "cashless society" that never happened. Checks and plastic cards are very important, but cash is there, and if you believe the IRS bemoaning the "underground economy," cash may be more important than ever before. Further, there will remain a market for "sight and feel" (e.g., all greeting cards), and such market cannot be served by a cathode ray tube.

5. Finally, in the near term, electronic systems will simply be too capital intensive for many small direct marketers and others not possessing the volume of sales to support the costs involved. These firms will remain customers—at least in the near term.

There is a national necessity to preserve both the USPS and its private express monopoly. ■

—Robert S. Posch

KEEPING POSTED

Planning to retire? You'll do yourself a favor if you submit your retirement application at least six weeks before you plan to leave the Postal Service. The advance notice allows time to verify all periods of civilian and military service, prepare post-retirement health and life insurance documents, and resolve any questions or problems. This preparation helps ensure that your application will contain the information necessary for speedy processing by the Office of Personnel Management. It's a wise precaution if you want your first retirement check to arrive on schedule.

A newly developed training program for the employee and management representatives on local safety and health committees brought union leaders and USPS officials together in Washington, DC, April 20.

Represented at the Headquarters meeting were the American Postal Workers Union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Rural Letter Carriers Association, the Mail Handlers Union, the USPS regions and the Headquarters Employee and Labor Relations Departments.

Participants—on hand to review the training materials—heard Postmaster General William F. Bolger call for "a dynamic, constantly improving safety program that will have the commitment and cooperation of every member of the Postal Service."

Bolger said the training of local labor-management committee members, which is scheduled to take place before October, will play a vital part in the program.

Established in installations of 50 or more employees, these committees were given an expanded role by the 1981 National Agreements between the USPS and postal unions. Among their new responsibilities are the review of safety and health suggestions, training records, reports of unsafe conditions or practices, and local safety and health rules. Committee members will also help to identify unsafe work practices and assist in work-rule enforcement.

Bolger said increased attention to safety in the past two years had already shown results. "We should be especially pleased," he said, "that, because of these efforts, many of our co-workers have been spared painful and needless injury."

He added: "To make these committees work, both management and labor at all levels must act responsibly and strive to create and sustain a climate of increased communication, mutual trust and improved understanding. If we are successful, and I am convinced we can be, the result will be a more positive attitude and approach on everyone's part—and an ever improving safety record."

"Hitting below the belt." That's the way Postmaster General William F. Bolger describes the Federal Express television commercial that shows two window clerks chatting about retirement and pointedly ignoring an Express Mail customer. One clerk keeps snapping, "We don't go there" and finally slams a window blind in the anxious mailer's face.

In a letter written April 30 to Federal Express President Fred Smith, the Postmaster General drew the offending ad to the attention of senior Federal Express management. "Considering the conversations we have had," wrote the PMG, "I can't believe you condone a commercial that insults the integrity of some 670,000 postal employees, the overwhelming majority of whom are diligent, courteous and efficient."

The Postal Service's Express Mail Next Day service reaches more than 3,000 post offices in 1,200 cities around the country. Its new 2-Pound Pak travels from post office to addressee for $9.35 and if it's not received by 3 p.m. the following day, customers can get a full refund. The post-office-to-post-office 2-Pound Pak costs only $5.85 and the money-back guarantee requires its arrival by 10 a.m. In other words, if you really, really need to get it there overnight, but want to save money, send it Express Mail. Express Mail, as postal advertisements say, "Makes you look good for less."

The Postal Service is helping employees to put the bite on careless dog and property owners. In fiscal year 1981, the USPS and employees recovered nearly $1.5 million in payments for lost work time, employee replacement costs, medical fees, and pain and suffering caused by negligence. Under an agreement reached in November 1980 with the Department of Labor, employees may now ask the Postal Service to represent them in seeking compensation from third parties for injuries such as falls or dog bites. Previously, employees and the Postal Service acted independently in trying to recover compensation and actual expenses. Richard Bauer, Injury Compensation program manager at Headquarters, notes that holding third parties liable for payment encourages them to correct situations that are a hazard to postal employees and the general public.

The U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, has upheld the Postal Service's right to offer E-COM (Electronic Computer Originated Mail) service. On April 20 the court denied a Department of Justice petition—brought December 31—which sought to stop the USPS from continuing the service.

The court's action is expected to encourage mailers to proceed with their plans to use E-COM service.

Since its introduction January 4, E-COM has won enthusiastic reviews from customers. They applaud its low cost (26 cents for one page, 31 cents for two) and speed. In most cases, users are getting one-day service, even in rural areas. Companies of virtually all sizes have used E-COM service to send announcements, newsletters, press releases, financial notices and general office correspondence.

Much credit for the success of the service should go to the employees who staff the E-COM units in the 25 serving post offices, according to Alice K. Gordon, president of Business Corporation of America, of Belmont, MA, one of the carriers that transmit E-COM messages. "The system is technologically superior and is staffed by totally dedicated employees," she says.

With interest in E-COM service growing, you may find yourself getting inquiries from potential customers. You can help them and the USPS by putting the customers in touch with your supervisor, postmaster or Customer Services department.

POSTAL PERSONALITIES

Mary Layton

A new voice is speaking up for the Postal Service. Mary J. Layton joined the USPS May 1 as Assistant Postmaster General for Public and Employee Communications. She succeeds Walter E. Duka who was appointed Assistant Postmaster General for International Postal Affairs.

Layton comes to the Postal Service after three years as a public affairs official at The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Earlier she was director of public relations for the YWCA of New York City, and before that worked for Joseph A. Davis Consultants, Inc., in the development of a national media campaign on child abuse for the former U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare. In a previous post, as associate director of the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity of New York, she administered business management training programs covering 40 courses.

In addition, she has served as a consultant to Baruch College of the City University of New York, as administrator of the Harlem Center for Child Study, and as a special education teacher for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted children.

Layton holds a bachelor of arts degree from Michigan State University and a master of arts degree from New York University.

In her new post she also will serve as a member of the USPS Executive Committee. ■

Two new members of the Postal Life Advisory Board are Linda Brown, a customer services representative in Detroit, MI, and Iris Ruiz, a distribution/window clerk in Homestead, FL, representing the Central and Southern Regions respectively.

At 26, Linda Brown is a young woman on the move. In her eight years with the Detroit General Mail Facility, she has worked as a distribution clerk, a ZMT operator, a PSDS technician and an industrial engineering staff assistant. She also has been detailed briefly in customer services, quality control, and employee and labor relations.

Brown has completed two PEDC management courses, holds a bachelor of science degree from Wayne State University and is now working toward a master's degree in business administration.

Last year, she became a customer services representative, the position she had been aiming for all along.

Linda Brown

For recreation, Brown plays tennis and racquetball, swims and goes horseback riding. She also has found time, as a member of the United Way speakers bureau representing three counties, to assist various businesses in getting their United Foundation Campaigns under way.

Does this energetic person ever relax? "Yes," she says, "I love to watch spectator sports and putter with ceramics."

Brown also cares for "lots and lots" of plants in the home she shares with her parents and three sisters. Her mother, incidentally, is the general accounting officer for the Detroit facility, and her younger sister, Sheryl, is a ZMT operator.

Some people yearn to live in New York, but Iris Ruiz, who already lived there, wanted to leave. "I wanted a chance to move— to get out of the Bronx," she says frankly. And, happily for her and her son, a job transfer was their ticket to a new life in Homestead, FL.

Iris Ruiz

Ruiz came to New York City from Puerto Rico with her family when she was 12. "We didn't have much money," she says, "so as soon as I was old enough I began working at many different jobs, mostly as a sales person, and finished high school at night."

A secretarial course at the Spanish-American Institute led to a job with the New York City Transit Authority, but she soon found a better paying job in a supermarket and stayed there eight years. Then, in 1970, she joined the Postal Service as a distribution clerk at the Bronx General Post Office.

Her opportunity to move came two years ago, after she had progressed to ZMT operator and then window services clerk. When Ruiz' application was accepted for a position in the Homestead Post Office, she packed her belongings—"every stick of furniture"—and took up residence in Florida.

Homestead is a medium sized associate office in the Miami Sectional Center. "We're located at the gateway to the Florida Keys," says Postmaster Jane Waters, "and naturally we get lots of applications. We're very happy to have Iris—she's an ideal employee. She has covered all the clerical positions and worked all the tours. Besides being willing and industrious, her sunny disposition makes her a joy to work with."

Back in the Bronx, Ruiz says, her home was "always filled with plants and flowers." Now she is able to expand that hobby outdoors. While her son, Ismael, attends college in Jacksonville, she contentedly grows roses in her own yard. ■

He's a grown-up now, but Bill Melton still likes toys—postal toys.

After many years of collecting all kinds of relics, from bottles to radios, Melton began narrowing his interests. Now, he concentrates on toys, especially those with a postal theme.

His interest is understandable, given that Melton has been a carrier for 22 years at the Shawnee Mission, KS, Post Office, is the son of a postal inspector and has an uncle who is also a carrier.

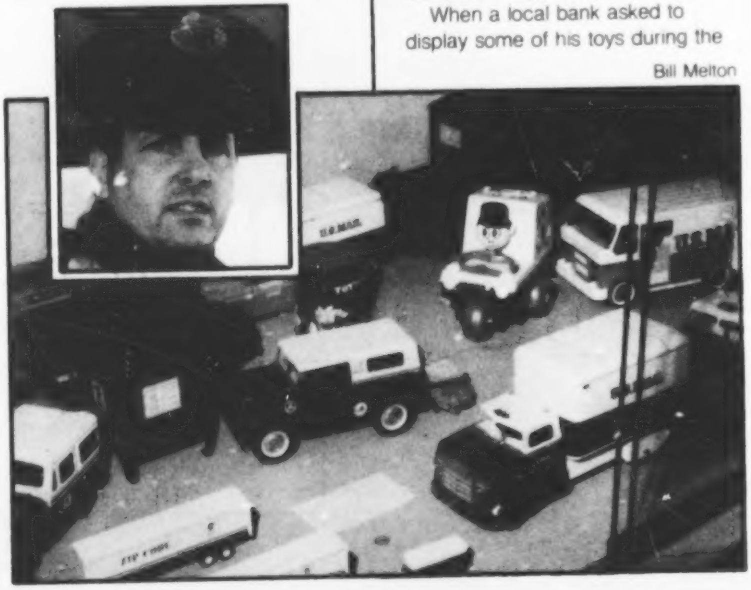
Apparently, the postal theme has been popular with toy manufacturers, too. Melton possesses many vintage replicas of postal vehicles and letter carrier figures, some from foreign countries. And he reports that his collection is still growing.

When a local bank asked to display some of his toys during the Christmas holidays, Melton included a few prized metal ones. Even as a child he appreciated their value. During World War II, when metal was scarce, friends and relatives in Enid, OK, where he grew up, resurrected old playthings from storage for his amusement. It was then that his lifelong fascination with old toys was born.

"I scour the flea markets and antique shops in the Shawnee Mission area," he says. "That way I've become acquainted with other collectors who will trade postal toys for Army toys."

Sometimes, though, Melton's prospecting takes a while to pan out. For the past four years, he has been negotiating with another collector who has a 1927 Keystone mail truck the carrier would like to buy. "I think he's holding on to the truck because his daughter has a mail plane to go with it. But he has told me if anything happens to him, I will have first crack at it." ■

Bill Melton



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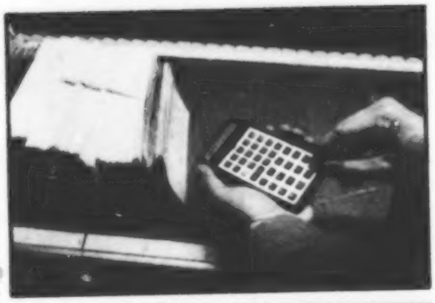
POSTMASTERS
When an employee moves, please remind that person to fill out PS form 1216 (Employee's Current Mailing Address) and to submit it to the personnel office in the post office where he works, making certain the employee's Social Security Number and the office's finance number are included. Do not send change to address to Postal Life.

CONTENTS



2

6

8

2 **SHARING GOOD IDEAS**
Model units around the country show how a top-notch facility should operate.

6 **AN ENGAGING USE OF INTELPOST**
Great Britain's most romantic couple is welcomed to New York.

8 **OPEN HOUSE—BRING THE FAMILY!**
1,500 friends, relatives and neighbors turned out to help the Northern Virginia Sectional Center celebrate its 10th birthday.

11 **GRAND MASTER PAC-MAN**
Video game champ "trained" on letter-sorting machines in Spokane, WA.

13 **IT PAYS TO SAVE**
Three postal people explain how they've used U.S. Savings Bonds as a down payment on a better life.

15 **I HAD MY SEAT BELT ON BUT MY DOOR WAS OPEN**
A letter carrier, now recovered and back on his old job, tells how he could have avoided losing part of his foot.

16 **A PROMISE KEPT**
A New Orleans distribution clerk raises $1,000 a year for sickle cell anemia.

18 **THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE: DINOSAUR OR DYNAMIC CARRIER?**
An attorney and columnist argues in favor of retaining the Private Express Statutes.

21 **KEEPING POSTED**

22 **POSTAL PERSONALITIES**

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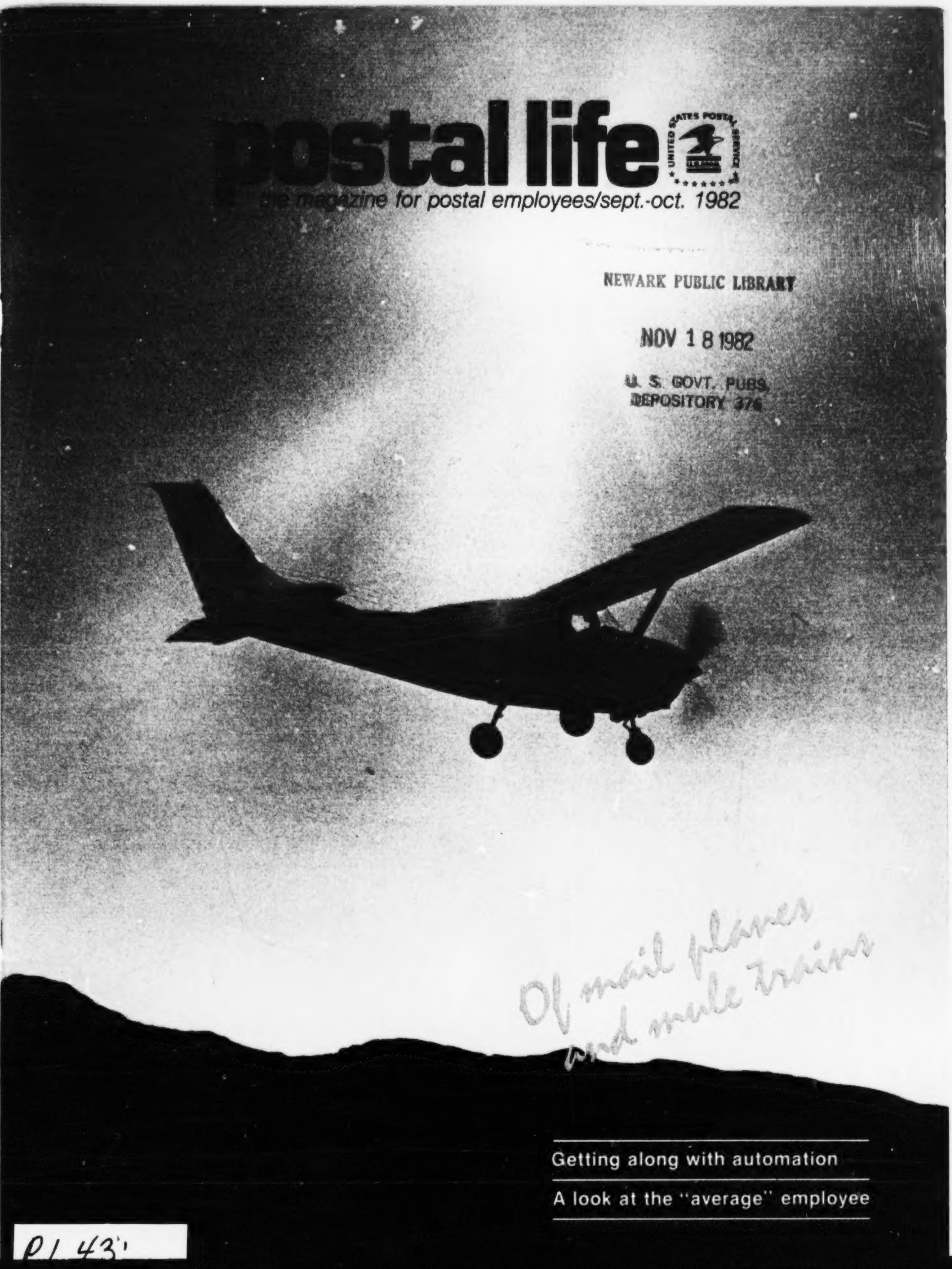


Of mail planes and mule trains

Getting along with automation

A look at the "average" employee

Pl 43'

Of mail planes and mule trains

Most mail carriers drive over good roads and highways and walk over well-paved neighborhood streets to deliver the nation's 369 million pieces of mail a day. Some, like Ray Arnold, regularly make daring trips over and into the wilderness.

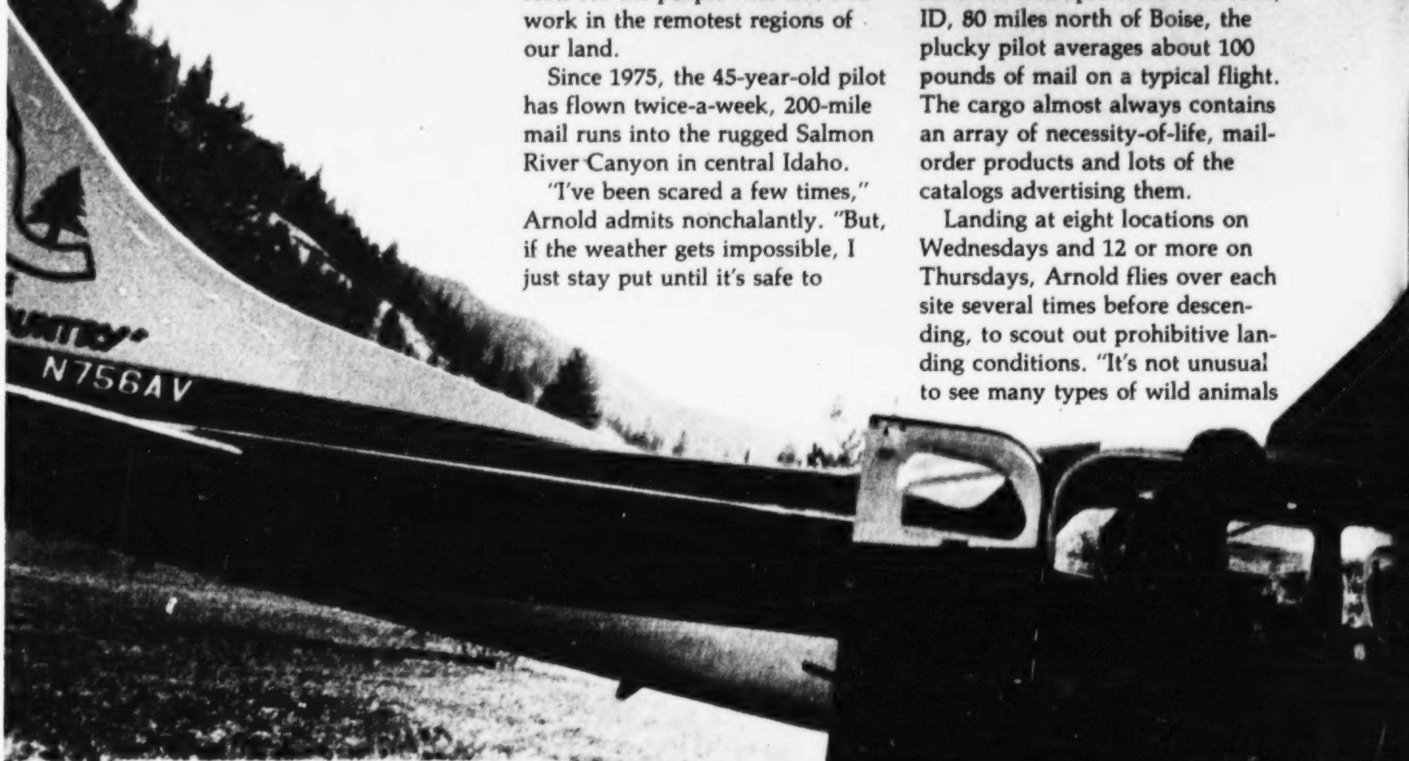
Under contract for the Postal Service, Arnold flies one of the 33 air taxi routes in the nation, providing communications and comforts for the people who live and work in the remotest regions of our land.

Since 1975, the 45-year-old pilot has flown twice-a-week, 200-mile mail runs into the rugged Salmon River Canyon in central Idaho.

"I've been scared a few times," Arnold admits nonchalantly. "But, if the weather gets impossible, I just stay put until it's safe to leave." At times, he's had to wait up to five days to fly into the canyon and he's been stuck at a wilderness site for several days at a time. During winter months, he equips his Cessna 206 with skis and makes the canyon run just once every two weeks.

Operating out of his Arnold Aviation headquarters in Cascade, ID, 80 miles north of Boise, the plucky pilot averages about 100 pounds of mail on a typical flight. The cargo almost always contains an array of necessity-of-life, mail-order products and lots of the catalogs advertising them.

Landing at eight locations on Wednesdays and 12 or more on Thursdays, Arnold flies over each site several times before descending, to scout out prohibitive landing conditions. "It's not unusual to see many types of wild animals



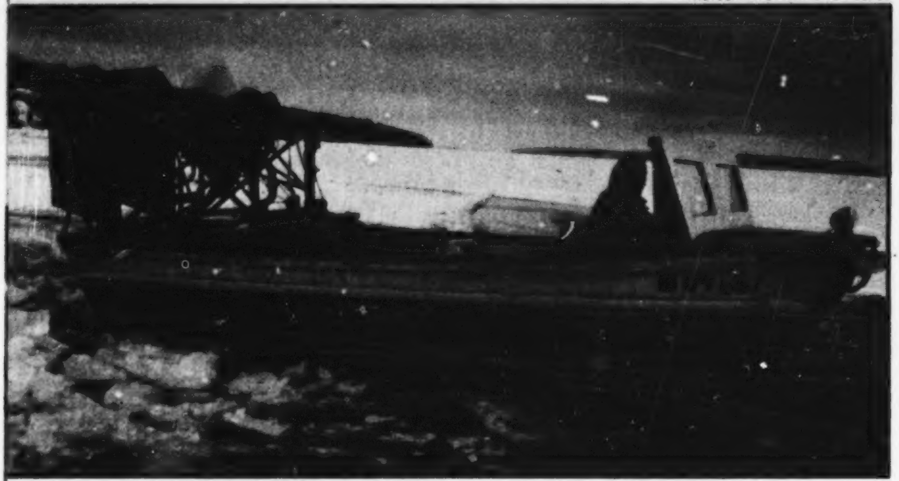
Landings on runways smaller than a football field are routine for Ray Arnold (left) who flies under contract for the Postal Service to serve ranchers like Tom Close.

grazing on some of the pastures that we use for landing fields," he says.

Arnold is one of the contractors who operate the 14 airplane mail routes in the lower 48 states; Alaska has another 14 of the routes, Puerto Rico has four and one is in Hawaii. Additional mail runs, particularly in Alaska, are

continued

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK S. McCABE



PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK S. McCABE

When the ice on Lake Superior is too thin for cars and too thick for conventional boats, the Bayfield, WI, Post Office sends mail to Madeline Island via a flat-bottom iceboat powered by an airplane propeller.

also flown by regularly scheduled airlines that arrange their own contracts for flights into bush country.

While Arnold and his fellow air taxi pilots personify a more glamorous mode of transportation, the Postal Service uses every practical transportation device available to move mail to every place in the nation, no matter how isolated. When the Tiffin River flooded early this spring, an enterprising postal employee in Stryker, OH, used a rowboat to deliver mail to a rural customer. Rowboats aren't the norm, of course, but a variety of boats and aircraft, along with snowmobiles, dogsleds, tractors, four-wheel drives and vehicles of every description get the job done.

As late as the mid-1970s horse and mule mail routes were still being operated by several hardy men in the hills of West Virginia and Kentucky. When Moses Walters quit, in 1977, after 25-plus years of mountain mail carrying around Stella, KY, this postal tradition ended in the east.

In Peach Springs, AZ, however, they're still loading up a pack train of mules every other day to take mail on an eight-mile journey to the Havasupai Indian village, 24,000 feet below the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

More than 300 tribe members receive mail throughout the year addressed to the Supai Post Office, ZIP Code 86435. During vacation months, they are joined by tourists who have obtained the Havasupais' permission to visit the reservation and stay at the hotel or two campsites at the bottom of the canyon. Everyone turns out to watch for the arrival of the unique mail train.

The mail cargo always contains food staples and other materials needed to keep life going at a reasonably comfortable level. Virginia Siyuja Hanna, Supai's postmaster for half of her 62 years, says: "When the pack train unloads in front of the post office, there's so much mail that I have to sort it outside of the building. A lot of it always goes to the store, which is right next door, or to the cafe up the street."

During the tourist season the pack train will sometimes make two extra trips a week with mail-order supplies. The Supai mail contractor, James Delaney of Peach Springs, hires two packers to make the trips up and down the very narrow mountain trails. The two, Wayne Fara, a Havasupai, and Charlie Chamberlain, who lives with his family on the reservation, are sometimes stopped in their tracks when water washes away the trail.

Delaney's pack train is one of about 12,400 "surface mail contract routes" operating throughout the United States and its possessions. Last year, these haulers chalked up more than 6.3 million miles, moving mail over land and water, into canyons and up mountain sides. In comparison, regularly employed USPS rural carriers traveled more than 2 million miles a *day* last year and the postal fleet covered 1.7 million miles a day.

Another contract operator is 55-year-old Francis Garnsey, who lives on Grindestone Island in the St. Lawrence River, in New York state. Garnsey uses two vehicles and two boats to provide mail service between the Clayton, NY, Post Office and the 20 or more families inhabiting Grindestone. He keeps a station wagon and a snowmobile on the island and a station wagon on the mainland. "I cut my eyeteeth on a boat," says Garnsey, who normally makes the six-mile trip in a 30-foot Chris Craft. "When winter ice clogs the route, I switch to a rear-propeller air boat with an airplane engine. Once in a while I get hung up on the ice and have to signal for help. I've sometimes waited for two hours before the help arrived."

Noting that the unusually severe weather in the past two winters has made him cautious, Garnsey says: "If I can't see anything, I don't go."

Up in northwest Wisconsin, at Bayfield, they've been using iceboats for a long time to keep mail moving over to Madeline Island, largest of the chain of Apostle Islands in Lake Superior.

In balmy weather, the Madeline Island Ferry Line carries mail—and cars and passengers—across the 2.6 miles of water. Bayfield

Postmaster Norb Sfarz says that when winter arrives it's another story. "Temperatures can reach 40 degrees below and the water always freezes hard," he says. "When this happens, we get the mail to the 150 permanent residents by driving a truck over a highway carved out of the ice. When the ice thaws in March, or when it's just beginning to freeze in December, an iceboat is used to keep the mail service going."

A unique mail service for ships on the Detroit River has continued faithfully since 1895. It began with the hazardous practice of exchanging mail between rowboats and the large vessels moving through the busy, commercial shipping lanes. Since 1948, the service has been operated by the J. W. Westcott Company, a family firm associated with lake shipping since 1823.

Some 10,000 annual, on-the-run mail deliveries to the passing ships are made 250 days a year by the J. W. Westcott II, ZIP Code 48222. The 44-foot steel boat, with a two-man crew, has delivered as many as one million pieces of mail a year to crewmen and passengers on domestic and foreign vessels as they moved up and down the river.

Although changes in trade patterns and the growth of ship sizes have combined to cause a decline in the amounts of mail handled, this unusual postal service remains a vibrant link in the nation's mail system.

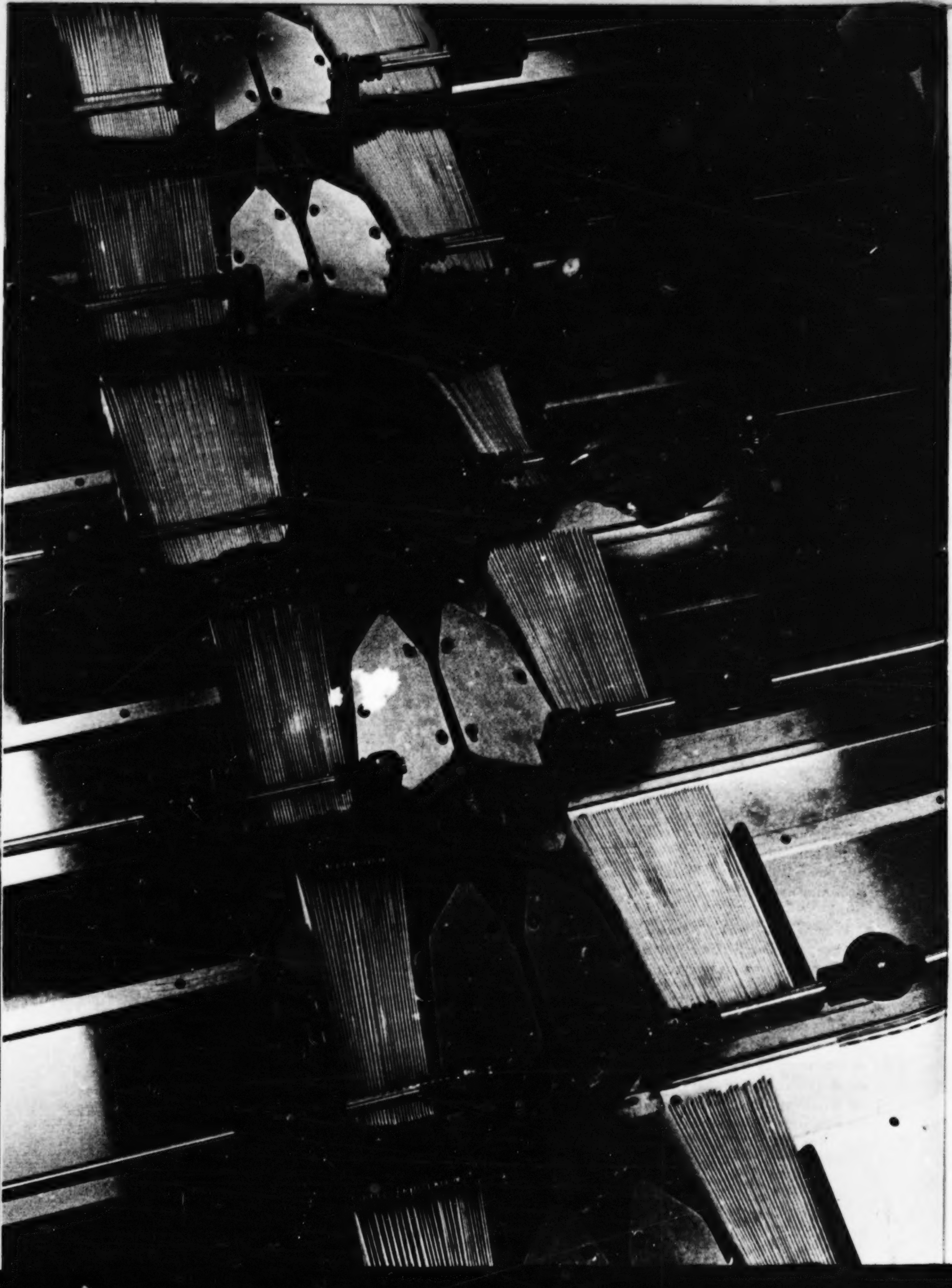
Whether it's the Ray Arnolds in the sky, the Charlie Chamberlains and Wayne Faras on the ground, or the Francis Garnseys on water, this rugged breed of private contractors reaches every remote place in the U.S. They aid the hundreds of thousands of regular postal employees to ensure that the promise of universal mail service is kept for everyone, wherever in this nation they choose to live. ■

—Joe McDonald

Photograph by Robert Martel

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM TSUNODA

The 300 Havasupai Indians who live 24,000 feet below the south rim of the Grand Canyon depend on a mule-train to bring them their mail. Bottom photo: Moving side-by-side along the Detroit River at 10 knots, the *J.W. Wescott II* and the *H. Lee White* exchange a precious commodity—the U.S. Mail.



GETTING ALONG WITH AUTOMATION

Phase I of the Postal Service's plan for automation of letter-mail processing began in September with installation of optical character readers in the Los Angeles Management Sectional Center and the USPS Technical Center in Norman, OK.

The new equipment is due to arrive in two additional cities in October and another four in November. After that, deliveries will increase and 12 or 13 OCRs will be arriving at postal facilities in February and during each of the next 17 months. When Phase I of the automation program is completed in July 1984, the new equipment will have been installed in the 118 postal facilities that account for 75 percent of all outgoing mail and 68 percent of incoming mail.

That's the big picture.

Postmaster General William F. Bolger gives further insight into what automation will mean to you and to the future of the Postal Service in his answers to the following questions.

How will automation change the Postal Service?

Mr. Bolger: Automation is a logical extension of the mechanization program we embarked on at the time of Postal Reorganization. It will eventually improve our organization even more than the innovations of the last 12 years.

It will enable us to surpass the major productivity limitation of our present mechanized system: that is, the need for a person to read and manually enter ZIP Code information for each piece of machinable mail. In turn, this new system will help hold down and spread out future rate increases —and keep our rates competitive so our business remains healthy and growing.

What effects will automation have on the postal workforce?

Mr. Bolger: Automation makes it possible to process the same volume of mail with a smaller workforce. However, if the size of our workforce must be reduced, this should take place through normal attrition, reductions in overtime and the use of fewer casual and part-time hours. There should be plenty of attrition over the next five years to take care of any eventuality associated with automation. And if our volume continues to grow, as I believe it will, there might be no shrinkage in our workforce.

Will automation result in reassignments?

Mr. Bolger: The entire process of automation will be gradual and we will strive to minimize reassignment of personnel. Keep in mind that although the equipment makes it possible for fewer people to do the same sorting job, it will also open up new career opportunities.

What are those opportunities?

Mr. Bolger: The equipment will require technicians and mechanics to keep it in good working order. And the demand for people with those skills will be greater than it is now, for the equipment is highly sophisticated and must be properly maintained if it is to operate at peak efficiency.

Why is the Postal Service automating?

Mr. Bolger: That, of course, is the most basic question of all. The answer lies in the Postal Reorganization Act, which instructs us "to maintain an efficient system of collection, sorting, and delivery of mail nationwide." We would be violating this mandate if we turned our backs on new technology that helps us do the job better and do it with substantially lower costs.

Given that 84 cents of every dollar we spend goes for wages and fringe benefits, we really have no other option. The Postal Service must change with the times if it is to remain competitive—if it is to process an increasing volume of mail at a reasonable cost and provide the level of service our customers demand. To do otherwise would be asking the public to pay more for less—to the tune of billions of dollars.

While it is true that automation of mail processing will alter the nature of certain postal jobs and present new challenges for others, the changes will be good overall for the Postal Service. Our organization will be leaner, stronger, more efficient, and better equipped to meet the challenges of the future head on. ■

An optical character reader will locate the city, state and ZIP Code on a letter and spray a bar-half-bar code on the envelope, then sort the letter to one of up to 60 channel stackers. The bar-code sorter shown here can distribute OCR-processed mail to as many as 100 separations.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK S. McCABE

JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS

The balloons went up in the Western Region and across the country postal, school and community groups were swinging into action to celebrate National Card & Letter-Writing Week (September 19-25) and National Stamp Collecting Month (October 1-31).

Our part in the festivities included launching a host of school and community projects and new editions of USPS philatelic items.

Balloons give big lift

It was up, up and away for nearly 1,000 balloonists September 19, as they helped get National Card & Letter-Writing Week off the ground in 13 western states.

Enacting the scene on the National Card & Letter-Writing Week poster, members of the Balloon Federation of America rose skyward trailing banners that urged, "Lift Spirits—Write." The group is celebrating the 199th anniversary of manned balloon flight this year. Postal employees were on hand at the launching sites to cancel stamps on specially imprinted envelopes commemorating the occasion.

Spread the word on design-a-stamp project

This year's celebration of National Card & Letter-Writing Week, September 19-25, kicked off a historic effort: our nation's first Student Stamp Design Project.

Open to students everywhere in grades kindergarten through 12—including children of postal employees—the project continues through November 30. Designs can be submitted to local post offices anytime between now and then, but the earlier they are received the better. This will allow time for the students' handiwork to be displayed in post offices, schools, libraries or other public facilities.

Then, the process of choosing the first-ever student-designed stamp will begin. Members of the National Art Education Association will review all the designs and select those that will be forwarded to the Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee for further review. The committee will in turn recommend several to Postmaster General William F. Bolger, who will make the final selection.

Teachers play an important part in this project, since they are spreading word of it among our nation's students and collecting batches of designs to submit to post offices. Students can, however, submit designs on their own to their local post offices.

Guidelines for the project have been kept short and sweet:

- Designs can be in any medium (pen and ink, pencil, crayon, watercolors, poster paints, oil paints, etc.).
- Subject matter is also wide open, though it is recommended that designs focus on "themes" (friendship, love, physical fitness and recreation, patriotism, Christmas and other holidays, building a better world, etc.) instead of persons.
- The preferred size for stamp designs—which can be either horizontal or vertical—is a rectangle roughly 4¼ inches by 7¼ inches (five times actual size). They can be larger or smaller as long as the proportions remain the same.
- Identifying information (student's name, teacher's name, grade, school name and address) must appear on the back of each design.
- All designs will become the property of the Postal Service and none can be acknowledged or returned.

That's all there is to it, except remembering the deadline for submission of stamp designs to local post offices: Tuesday, November 30.

Help the Postal Service spread the word!

Repeat of a best-seller

As part of the National Letter-Writing Week celebration two

The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps
1983 Stamp Prices
All about letters

years ago, the USPS and the National Council of Teachers of English joined forces to produce a book that would encourage young people to write letters. *All about letters* was the result and an instant hit with sixth through twelfth grade teachers who wanted their classes to learn more about letter writing. More than 125,000 copies were sold.

In September, a new edition of *All about letters* was issued in conjunction with this year's National Card & Letter-Writing Week. The 64-page booklet includes comments on letter-writing from Tracy Austin, Lee Trevino and excerpts from *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* by Judith Martin. That's in addition to remarks from "Dear Abby" and Stevie Wonder on the importance of letter-writing, and how-to sections on applying for a job or college, complaining about products and much more. Copies of the book are available through the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. The cost is $2.50 for a single copy and $1.50 each for orders of 20 or more.

Helping hands

Post offices around the country are promoting a plan that will help the elderly and handicapped maintain correspondence with family and friends. The Volunteer Scribe program, begun during National Card & Letter-Writing Week, encourages Scout, church and other youth groups—such as the 1.3 million members of the USPS sponsored Ben Franklin Stamp Clubs—to aid shut-ins and the residents of hospitals and senior citizen centers by writing letters for them.

'By any other name...'

What's in a name? Plenty, in the case of the goldmine of information on U.S. stamps that the Postal Service has published for years under the title *Stamps & Stories.* As it turns out, the name was misleading to some potential buyers. People interested in collecting stamps would look at the title and colorful cover but never open the reference work, figuring it was too juvenile. Parents, on the other hand, would thumb through the book but decide the content was too advanced for their youngsters. The solution? A completely revised version of *Stamps & Stories* has been published under the more dignified title, *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps.* The 280-page paperback will continue to sell for $3.50, but offers new features as well as the old favorites. For example, the book now includes a listing of the philatelic centers operated by the USPS, a special section on 1982 stamp issues and the current prices of philatelic products issued by the Postal Service in past years.

New collecting kits

Nine new stamp collecting kits—the first new editions to appear in about six years—are scheduled to go on sale during National Stamp Collecting Month. The initial four *Outer Space, Sports, Spirit of America* and *Science and Scientists* went on sale October 1. They will be followed in mid-October by *Animals, Famous Persons, Transportation* and *30 Stamps from 30 Countries.* The kits, which are excellent introductions to stamp collecting for beginners, all sell for $2.50 each, except for *Outer Space*, priced at $3. Set to debut in November are the *1982 Commemorative Mint Set*—a traditional bestseller during the holidays which will retail for $6.50—and the *1982 United States Stamp Collecting Kit,* which will sell for $2.

Birds & Flowers back

Thinking Christmas? If you liked the Birds and Flowers stamps, you'll love *The Fifty State Birds and Flowers Mint Set.* The 16-page soft-cover product will feature art developed by the stamps' designers, Arthur Singer and Alan Singer, as well as stories related to the state birds and flowers. It is scheduled to go on sale November 1 and will cost $11. A 64-page hardbound album, *Birds and Flowers of the Fifty States—A Collection of United States Commemorative Stamps,* displaying photographs and stories of each state's bird and flower, will go on sale in December for $17. ■

pirit of
America
Stamp Album
OUTER
SPACE
Stamp Album
SPORTS

THIS IS PITTSBURGH PHIL

A CSR remembers his friend—baseball's legendary Roberto Clemente

When Vera Clemente saw Phil Dorsey, she broke down: "Oh, Phil! We've lost him! We've lost number 21!"

Phil Dorsey, a Customer Service Representative in Pittsburgh, had just arrived at the Clemente home, having taken the first available flight to Puerto Rico after hearing about the tragic death of his close friend, Roberto—"Number 21."

Recalling the New Year's Eve in 1972 when he received the tragic news about Clemente, Dorsey says: "I had gotten a phone call from someone wanting to settle a bet about Roberto's lifetime batting average. About an hour later, just after midnight, another caller told me that a report was circulating that a plane had crashed and Roberto went down with it. Then Manny (Sanguillen, former Pirate star) called and said,"Vera needs you here."

When he arrived, Dorsey found the household in an uproar; friends, reporters and unknown Clemente admirers were milling around in the confusion. "I took over and insisted that Vera get some much needed rest," he says. "Then I moved everyone out of the house except family and close friends."

Taking charge of a situation is not unusual for Dorsey. At age 55. he pursues three simultaneous careers on a schedule that defies a 24-hour day:

- A highly regarded Pittsburgh Post Office customer service representative since 1980, constantly involved in customer and community relations activities;
- The first ("top") sergeant for the 339th General Hospital Unit of the Army Reserve and responsible for 535 reservists; and
- An unofficial but much valued member of the Pittsburgh Pirates ball club with his own locker at Three Rivers Stadium.

Actually, it was just chance that kept Dorsey from joining Clemente's mercy mission to Nicaragua in 1972—the flight that carried the brilliant Pirate rightfielder to an early death. Just a few days before the plane crash, in one of their frequent off-season telephone calls, Clemente had asked Phil to join him in San Juan and help with the relief shipment he planned to bring to Nicaragua's earthquake victims. But other commitments kept Phil from making that trip.

The Dorsey and Clemente friendship began when the 18-year-old Pirate rookie first arrived in America's steel town, in 1955, a year after Dorsey, a Korean War veteran, joined the Postal Service as a mail handler.

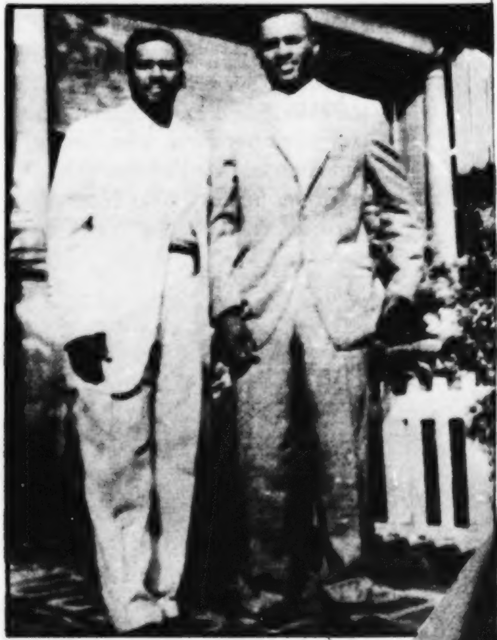
"Bob Friend (former Pirate pitching great) was a member of my reserve unit," Dorsey recalls. "And he sometimes invited me to the games. One day we were down at the rightfield bullpen when Roberto arrived early at the park. As he walked to right field, Friend introduced me to Roberto as his 'sergeant.' Roberto thought I was a policeman and he asked me about a place to live."

Even then, Clemente was showing the talent and character that was to make him an almost mythical figure in his native Puerto Rico and his adopted hometown of Pittsburgh. But he spoke little English and was having difficulty adjusting to his unfamiliar surroundings. So Dorsey took him in hand—in a way that he later was asked to do with other rookies—guiding Clemente through such basics as apartment leasing and finding wholesome places to eat.

Over the years, as the friendship grew, Dorsey served as a member of Roberto and Vera Clemente's wedding party and became "Uncle Phil" to their youngsters, Roberto Jr., Luis and Ricky.

It didn't take long for the Pirates' management to recognize that Phil's friendship and support were having a positive effect on the young rookie. "General Manager Joe Brown called me in one day and asked me if I would talk to some of the other younger Latin and black ballplayers," recalls Dorsey, adding that Clemente made certain the younger players had a chance to meet Phil.

Dorsey says that the fund of wisdom he passes along to the youngsters was a gift from his stepfather: "My dad (stepfather) struggled to bring up a family of four boys and take care of my mother during Depression years, but he always taught us never say



'no' if you can do something for somebody. On the other hand, he always said, 'Don't do it expecting something in return.' "

This kind of philosophy provides a key to the esteem he inspires in those who work with him. His Army Reserve commanding officer summarizes the sentiments of Dorsey's postal managers: "I don't know how he does it all," says Col. (Dr.) Albert G. Saloom who recently presented Dorsey with the Army Achievement Medal for "exceptionally meritorious service to the unit."

It's the same at Three Rivers Stadium. On the day of a game, his car is waved into the players' entrance and he parks it among the Rolls Royces and sports cars that bring team members to work. Typically, he'll go straight to the park after he finishes at the post office.

His locker—next door to 19-year Pirate first baseman Willie Stargel's—contains his own special uniform: the official Pirates' baseball cap, a yellow shirt with black letters reading "The Star," a pair of white slacks cut off at the knees and white knee socks.

Prior to game time, Phil is all over the place, kidding with one player after another, listening for ways that he can lend a hand or offer advice.

In return, the players have been generous with their time for community and postal activities, often showing up at the post office to help with fund-raising events or publicize employee campaigns.

Pirate Vice President and Secretary Tom Johnson to this day credits Dorsey as being "instrumental in the success of Roberto Clemente."

The ballplayers fondly call Phil the "Old Fossil" and he has a pet name for each of them: Manager Tanner is "Skip;" pitcher John Candelaria, "Candy;" catcher Tony Pena, "Mr. Domino;" infielder Johnny Ray, "JR;" infielder Dale Berra, "Ditto;" and so it goes throughout the lineup.

But it was Roberto Clemente who tagged Dorsey with the nickname that local sports reporters still use when they write about the pair and the closeness they shared. When reporters asked Clemente to identify his companion he said simply, "This is Pittsburgh Phil."■

—Joe McDonald

The design of a commemorative stamp honoring Roberto Clemente was unveiled in Yankee Stadium September 11. It will be issued in 1984.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDDIE PEREZ

CARRIER FARRIER

His U.S. Cavalry training is still in demand

An 18-year veteran of the USPS, Harrison "Sergeant" Murphy has been a horseshoer since 1936. His clients have included the Army's "Olympic Show Team" and horses belonging to fan dancer Sally Rand and bandleader Paul Whiteman.

Though he neither rides nor owns one, horses take up a large portion of Harrison "Sergeant" Murphy's time and attention. A professional farrier for more than 45 years, the 68-year-old letter carrier in Manhattan, KS, estimates he has shod more than 50,000 horses—sometimes as many as 15 in one day.

On a typical work day, Murphy finishes his mail route around 4 p.m., stops at home to change clothes and get a bite to eat, then fits shoes on three or four horses before bedtime. On Sundays, he averages seven horseshoeing jobs.

The nickname "Sergeant" comes from Murphy's 29 years with the U.S. Army, where he learned the horseshoeing trade. This was a period when he saw history in the making, but he would like to set the record straight about the times it covered. "Contrary to the humorous belief of my fellow mail carriers at the Manhattan Post Office," he says, "I was never an authentic Indian scout or the personal horseshoer for General Custer during his Indian fighting days."

Murphy did, however, meet many celebrities in the course of his work. In 1936, shortly after

earning an instructor's diploma from the Second Cavalry's training school for horseshoers at Fort Riley, KS, his detachment participated in the Texas centennial celebration in Fort Worth. There, in addition to performing as a member of his company's Black Horse Musical Drill Team, the young sergeant worked at shoeing, not only the detachment's horses, but those of Turk Greenough, the 1935 world champion bronco rider; fan dancer Sally Rand, band director Paul Whiteman (the waltz king of the 1930s) and entrepreneur Billy Rose, the show's producer.

Returning to Fort Riley in 1939, Murphy became an instructor at the horseshoers' training school and, in 1941, received an appointment as farrier for the Army's crack equestrian team, sometimes referred to as its "Olympic Show Team."

"Of the many excellent horseshoers in the U.S. Army, only three or four have enjoyed this honor," says Murphy. "It was the dream of working with this team that made me want to be a horseshoer."

Murphy also felt privileged to shoe for Colonel Hiram E. Tuttle: "This gentleman, in addition to his many other outstanding accomplishments, trained two horses to canter backward, and he performed with the Army jumping team at the world Olympics."

But, in 1943, just when Murphy felt he had reached the pinnacle of success, his horseshoeing came to a halt until after World War II. Promoted to first sergeant, he moved from horses to mechanized units and spent three years in the Philippines before returning, in 1946, to his old training school.

There, he and five other "diehard" farriers (all master sergeants) saw horses phased out of the Army. (Many of the horses were put into service by the New York City police force.)

In short order, Murphy made a transition from horseshoes to snowshoes. As part of a snowshoe and ski outfit, he was stationed on Hokkido island in Japan where there was snow on the ground five months out of the year. There he was inspired to write a poem describing the officers and enlisted men as "camped in exile, doomed to vegetate and rot, the outside world forgotten, and by that world forgot."

The monotony, however, was broken too soon. In 1950 Murphy's division was shipped from Japan to Korea, going in on high tide at the Inchon Landing. He was by then a platoon sergeant and tank commander. "This was a police action," he says, "and the bandits were many."

Back home in Manhattan in time for the "big flood of 1951," Murphy began a series of Stateside assignments including acting as civilian advisor to National Guard units in the Wichita area, ROTC instructor at Kansas State University and chief of tactics, drill and command at the non-commissioned officers academy at Fort Riley. He taught tactics prior to his retirement in 1963.

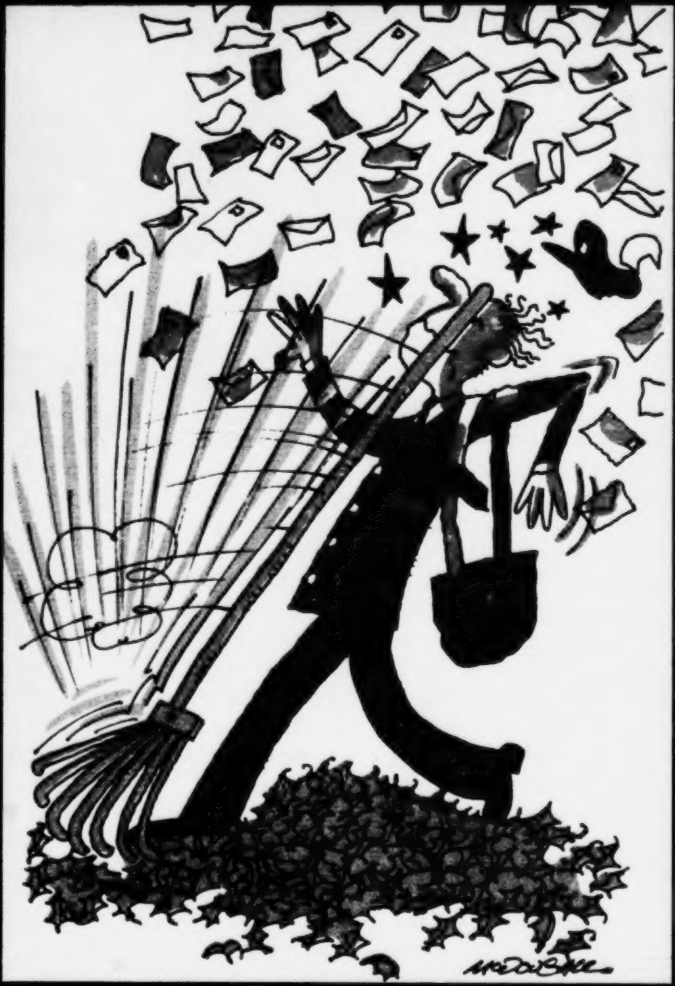
Retirement? In Murphy's book that meant a new career, and he started in 1964 as a letter carrier at the Manhattan Post Office. There he displayed the energy and enthusiasm that continue, even after 18 years, to amaze and inspire his co-workers.

"At one time or another, I've been assigned to every route in the city," he declares. "C-10, the college route which I now carry, has a fair turnover of students and is very interesting and challenging. I enjoy it."

Murphy's boss, Officer-In-Charge Vernita Martin, calls him a first-rate employee. "He's conscientious, thorough and cheerful. And if he finishes casing his mail early, he offers to help someone else."

But, dedicated as he is to his postal job, Murphy can't forget his old calling. He started spare-time shoeing for the public in 1941 and now turns away as many customers as he is able to accept. ■

—Catherine Courtney



WATCH YOUR STEP

Rakes obscured by leaves have a nasty way of turning up in someone's face. Leaves also obscure tools, uneven surfaces, and even children at play. They're slippery too, especially when wet. So be extra careful when you're walking or driving over leaves.

FOR THE

Here are the answers to the dog bite prevention contest quiz in our last issue. A sampling of the entries with wrong answers indicated that question number five was the one missed most frequently, followed by questions three, seven and ten.

1. If a dog is sleeping in the side yard, you should quietly slip up to the front door to make your delivery so that you won't disturb the dog. True or false?

False. Dogs are known for their keen senses. You'd more than likely startle him and increase the possibility of an attack. Confronted with this situation you should make some slight noise such as a soft whistle so that he won't be surprised by your sudden presence.

2. Turning away and quickly retreating from a snarling dog will assure the dog that you mean no harm and will probably prevent a painful bite. True or false?

False. Turning and running often increases the dog's confidence in himself and offers an opportunity for him to bite you while your back is turned. In addition, there is little chance that you will succeed in outrunning a determined dog. Standing your ground, looking

The winners are:

John J. Cook
Letter Carrier
Heritage Station
Schenectady, NY

Richard L. Moore
Letter Carrier
Wyoming Branch
Grand Rapids, MI

Answers & Winners

DOG BITE PREVENTION CONTEST

him square in the eyes, and slowly backing away from a snarling dog will increase your chances of not being bitten.

3. A good idea is to always carry dog biscuits with you on the route so that you can befriend the over-protective dog. True or false?

False. Too often the dog will readily accept the treat but still not accept you. You'd do better to win acceptance by acting friendly and calling him by name if you know it. In any case, keep a safe distance.

4. Many dog bites occur as a result of a dog's instinct to protect his owner's premises. True or false?

True. Dogs instinctively recognize their owner's premises as territorial boundaries, and attacks can occur as a result of protecting those boundaries. Before entering a customer's property, quickly glance at all the places a dog may be stationed—under parked cars, behind hedges, on the porch, etc.

5. So that you don't leave it "back at the station," you should secure the container of animal repellent to your mail cart or vehicle dashboard. True or false?

False. More frequently an attack by a dog will occur away from your mail cart or vehicle. Consequently, when you need the repellent it will not be handy. It is advisable to carry the repellent with you.

6. Dogs will attack only when they are threatened or challenged by the carrier. True or false?

False. Dogs need only THINK they or their owners are being threatened or challenged to attack. Sudden movements such as picking up a dropped letter or handing mail to a customer can easily result in an attack. Avoid quick movements when even the friendliest dog is near.

7. Dogs always make their intentions known by barking or growling before attacking someone. True or false?

False. Many dog bites have occurred without previous warning. Don't get caught off guard because a dog doesn't display hostility.

8. Carriers need not be concerned about being attacked if the family dog is confined behind a closed screen door or storm door. True or false?

False. The only thing between you and the dog is the door. All that is necessary is a worn latching device or someone from inside innocently opening the door to get the mail and the dog is loose. Remain alert to these possibilities at all times.

9. It is a good idea to spray each of the larger dogs along your route at least once with animal repellent to let them know they don't stand a chance if they attempt to bite you. True or false?

False. Only attacking dogs should be sprayed with repellent. The element of surprise combined with the action of the spray may ensure an angry canine each time he sees you.

10. Talking softly to a dog while trying to pet him will often make him realize that you are a friend rather than an intruder. True or false?

False. Although well intentioned, this approach continues to be a source of dog bites. An attempt to pet even the friendliest dog is taking an unnecessary risk.

About 10,000 postal employees entered the Dog Bite Prevention Contest in the July-August issue of Postal Life.

Eight people won $50 gift certificates from the direct mail order catalog of their choice. All winners were selected at random. ■

Federico O. Martinez
Letter Carrier
Los Alamos, NM

Jim Espenson
Postmaster
Cle Elum, WA

John R. Stuper
North Suburban
Distribution Clerk
Chicago, IL

Ray W. Daehnke
Letter Carrier
Brooklyn Station
Baltimore, MD

William E. Miller
Supply Clerk
Bulk Mail Center
Memphis, TN

Robert L. Parham
Letter Carrier
Waycross, GA

Who are we?

Using available statistics to paint a picture of the average postal employee is like trying to see the back of your head in a mirror. You get only a tantalizing glimpse.

You can see, however, that we're beginning to get a bit grey. About 70 percent of us are 35 or older and, on the average, we're 44 years old.

Fortunately, the saying, "You're not getting older, you're getting better," couldn't be more true in our case. Our collective maturity and experience helped the Postal Service achieve a 38 percent productivity increase in its first 11 years—pretty good proof we're getting better. And, as a work force, we may not be getting older in the years ahead. Last year, in line with recent trends, more than 61,000 of us were eligible for retirement, although fewer than half (25,000) chose to clock out for the last time. An additional 35,000 said goodbye for other reasons, and we welcomed 55,000 newcomers aboard.

Longevity in service is the rule among postal employees. Witness the 10 remarkable employees, ranging in age from 71 to 81, who have 50 years of service each and are well into their 51st.

The average employee has worked in the Postal Service 14 years, and probably put in two to 20 years in the military before passing the postal exam. Roughly 369,000, or 55 percent, of all postal employees are veterans. This combination of postal and military years of service helps explain the four weeks of annual leave that the average employee enjoyed last year. Length of postal service also accounts for the average salary of $21,054 (plus $2,386 in benefits, which includes the cost of annual leave). Age does have its rewards.

The large number of veterans also sheds light on the male-female ratio in the Postal Service: 492,000 of us are male (73 percent) and 178,000 (27 percent) are female.

In terms of minorities, we're a pretty fair sample from the melting pot. The 133,000 of us who are black make up the largest minority group; the 1,500 in the American-Indian-and-Alaskan-Native category are our smallest minority. In-between are our 29,000 Hispanics and 10,000 Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.

We don't know how many of us are married and whether the parents among us go home to the American average of 1.9 children. Although we suspect the numbers are large, we don't even know how many of us are part of "postal couples" or "postal families."

To find out, we'd need a census of our 670,000 regular employees—a population larger than the number of men, women and

children in such cities as Memphis, San Jose, Milwaukee or Cleveland.

We do know that we work in some 39,000 postal facilities coast-to-coast and beyond. In addition to serving customers in the 48 contiguous states, we deliver in Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Hawaiian District—which includes 2,000 islands in an area larger than the continental United States.

Most of us, however, work in major metropolitan areas: 60 percent of all postal employees work in 162 mail processing facilities; 22 percent work in the 20 largest offices. By major categories, 266,000 of us are clerks; 226,000 are city and rural carriers; 39,000 are mail handlers; 33,000 are in maintenance; 29,000 are postmasters; 40,000 are supervisors and managers; and the remaining 37,000 fill dozens of specialized jobs ranging from security officer to data processing technicians.

Unlike the average U.S. family—nearly 20 percent of the American population moves once a year—we're more upwardly mobile than we are geographically. Some 24,000 of us earned promotions last year, becoming postmasters, supervisors or moving up to administrative and technical posts.

In contrast, less than 14,000 of us changed job locations—which could mean a transfer up the road or across the country. This includes nearly 10,000 craft employees who decided to plant roots in a different part of the country. But when we did move, our transfers into different regions were about equal: We showed no particular preference for mountains, seashores, the sunbelt or the northeast.

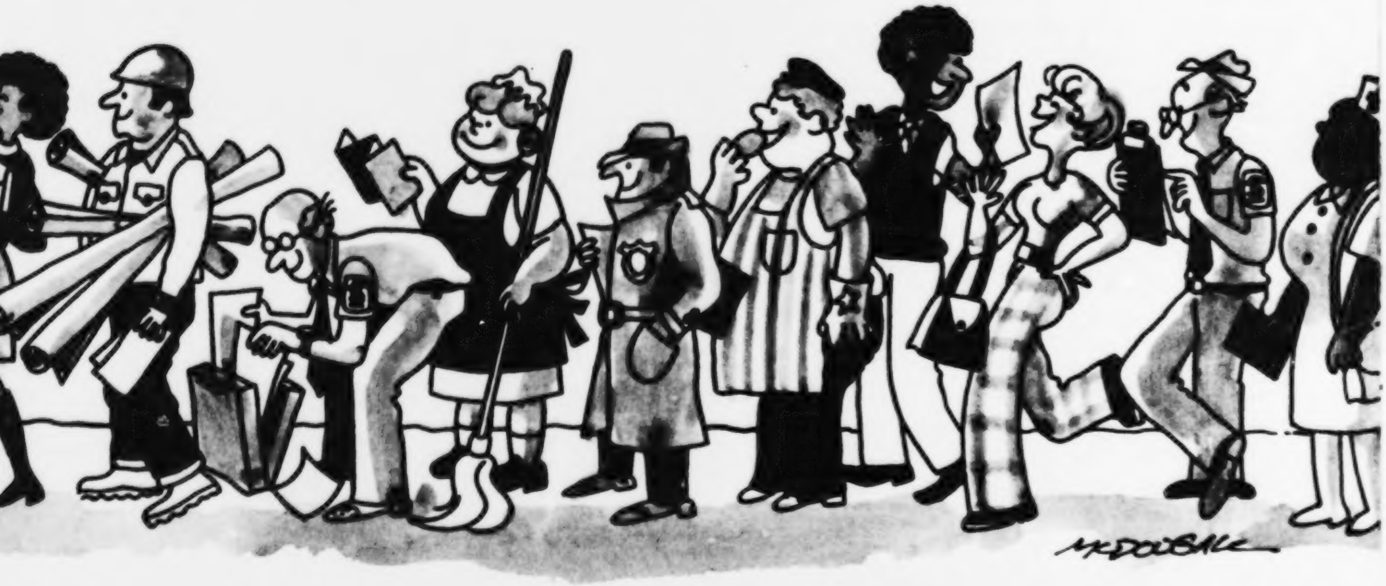
Wherever we live, we are likely to be valued citizens of our communities. More than $46 million from our paychecks was earmarked for local taxes last year, $523 million was deducted for state taxes and the federal government withheld—are you ready?—$3.2 billion.

Even so, we managed to sock away $55 million in U.S. Savings Bonds last year and when the Combined Federal Campaign passed the hat, we tossed in $19.50 apiece, on the average, a whopping $13.1 million in all.

We're energy conscious, too. Since 1975, we've turned off unnecessary lights and adjusted to warmer summers and cooler winters to reduce energy use in existing postal facilities by 24 percent. And, to save fuel and reduce pollution, nearly 60,000 of us in larger cities joined a carpool, rode a bus, bicycled or walked to work last year.

How many postal people are stamp collectors? No one knows. Nor can we count the number of doctorates, master's degrees and bachelor's degrees we have among us—but it's probably a significant figure. How many artists, musicians, writers are there? PTA members, Scout masters, lay preachers, Sunday school teachers? There are no totals available.

But the current and past editors of *Postal Life* can testify that there are so many of us with unique and remarkable skills, talents and personalities; so many who are steadfast, heroic, compassionate and-philanthropic that only one conclusion is safe: The "average"postal employee is far from"average."And if you don't believe it, just keep reading this magazine. ■



Last year Edwin A. Martinez was working as a post office distribution clerk in New York City. Today he is serving a two-year term in federal prison for sale and possession of illegal drugs. Kevin P. Hargrove, a former post office custodian in New York, is spending a year in prison for the same reason.

These cases from Postal Inspection Service files exemplify a growing problem in the nation and the Postal Service. More than 26 million Americans use marijuana, cocaine and other illegal substances, according to latest statistics from the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

As drug abuse has become more widespread in the nation it has presented an increasing problem in the nation's workplaces—threatening the safety of employees who must work with individuals whose judgment and coordination may be impaired by drugs.

Last year, acting to curb this threat to postal employees, the Postal Inspection Service created a special narcotics investigative program. Since October 1981, some 50 inspectors from around the country have participated in the program, learning techniques that help them determine which employees are using drugs on duty and where they are getting them.

To date, Inspection Service investigations have led to the arrest of 54 employees. In addition, the stepped-up efforts to stop drug-related crimes have highlighted the hazards to employees' safety and the disruption of postal operations posed by a small minority of drug users and dealers.

For instance, an employee who overdosed on heroin during working hours was found to have had nine on-the-job accidents. The employee admitted that he used heroin even while driving a five-ton postal truck. In another case, 25 employees identified as regular cocaine users had each suffered at least one on-the-job accident.

While employee safety is the driving force behind efforts to rid the workplace of illegal drugs, the Inspection Service has found that drug abuse is often related to other postal crimes. The majority of the employees arrested for sale and possession of illegal drugs have also been involved in mail theft.

A postal contract driver arrested in Wisconsin confessed that he stole 15,000 pieces of mail in his search for money to support his cocaine habit. A window clerk arrested in New York for rifling mail acknowledged that he needed the money to support his $60-a-day heroin habit.

"Right now, 'coke' costs about $100 a gram on the street and heroin about $50 a fix," explains Chief Postal Inspector Kenneth H. Fletcher. "Drug habits are expensive, so mail becomes a tempting target when users need money to finance their buys."

Investigations of mail thefts committed by employees who use illegal drugs have also uncovered a substantial number of time-card falsifications—another criminal offense.

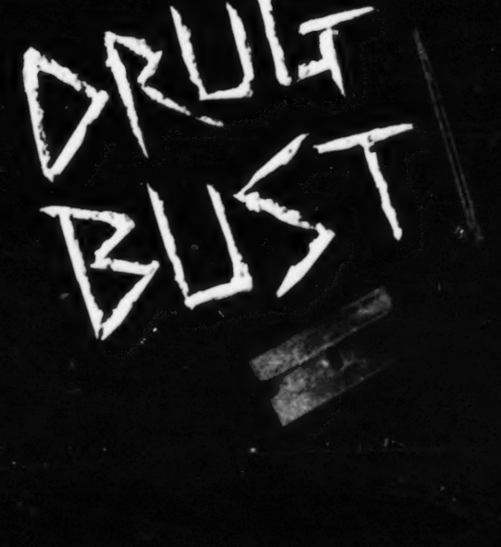
Along with the increase in these incidents, however, has come an increase in the number of disciplinary actions, arrests and criminal convictions. Robert Hill, removed from his job as a mail handler in New York, was convicted for sale and possession of illegal drugs. Postal inspectors who arrested Hill said his conviction eliminated a major drug source for at least 25 other suspected dealers and 100 customers, all postal employees.

Fletcher says that the cases against employees arrested on drug charges are so well-documented that defendants rarely choose a jury trial. "Almost all defendants plead guilty as fast as they can to avoid a jury trial," he says. "Their sentences could be a lot tougher—and they know it—if 12 citizens sat in judgment."

The problem is no longer confined to large cities, according to Fletcher, who says that inspectors are finding a disturbing number of drug-related crimes occurring in small-town post offices as well.

He adds that the Inspection Service's accelerated efforts will continue as long as the situation persists. "Sale and possession of illegal drugs is a double-edged problem for the Postal Service," says the Chief Inspector. "First, plainly and simply, these activities are against the law. Second, they undermine the safety of all employees and the overall health of the postal system. We cannot tolerate such activities by employees who are on duty or on postal property." ■

Dan Oddone



KEEPING POSTED

The time for giving is upon us.

This year's Combined Federal Campaign—extending from October through mid-November in most areas—is especially important, coming as it does when a national reordering of priorities has underscored the need for voluntary sharing.

As in the past, you can designate the agency to which you want your contribution to go—in fact, you can specify that it be divided among up to five agencies of your choice. This guarantees that your money goes precisely where you want it to go and nowhere else. This is not a requirement, however.

For more details on the agencies participating in the fund-raising drive in your area—more than 300 charitable and social service organizations are involved nationwide—see your facility's CFC coordinator. He or she will be glad to give you additional information on the program and answer any questions you may have.

Recently enacted legislation contains two provisions of particular interest to postal and other federal employees.

Beginning January 1, we will start paying the portion of the Social Secuity tax that finances Medicare, the federal health program for people over 65, people of any age with permanent kidney failure and certain disabled people.

The Social Security Administration will announce the amount of wages to be taxed—at 1.3 percent—in November. Currently, it is expected to be the first $35,100 of our salaries.

In return for paying the tax, eligible employees automatically become entitled to the benefits of Medicare hospital insurance coverage. To get Medicare coverage for doctors' bills and other medical services and supplies, eligible employees would also have to pay an insurance premium—as everyone else enrolled in the program already does.

If you are 65 or otherwise eligible for Medicare, you may want to investigate what this optional insurance does and does not cover before deciding what kind of health insurance you want under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. Contact your nearest Social Security office for a pamphlet called "Your Medicare Handbook" for additional information.

President Ronald Reagan has named Peter E. Voss to serve on the USPS Board of Governors for a term expiring in 1990. Voss, 52, is president and chief executive officer of Northeastern, inc., of Canton, OH, a diversified engineering, metal processing and power transmission systems company he founded in 1954. He also heads Decision Systems, Inc., a management consulting firm. As one of the nine Governors of the Postal Service, he will participate in developing USPS policy and making final decisions on rate and classification matters.

The Postal Service has hired a private consultant to conduct a study of the Service's employment policies and practices, particularly as they affect women and minorities.

The New York firm—Clark, Phipps, Clark & Harris—specializes in addressing affirmative action and race relations issues. The purpose of the study is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the USPS personnel system and to recommend changes in personnel policies and procedures.

In September CPC&H began a series of interviews with a sample of USPS officials and managers. The firm will make a telephone survey of a randomly selected cross section of USPS employees later in the year and will conduct intensive studies of selected cases.

Says CPC&H: "Information collected during the interviews will be held in the strictest confidence."

If you've noticed that you've handled more advertising mail this year, give yourself an "A" for observation. Third-class mail now makes up one-third of our business and is the segment that's contributing the most to our overall volume growth. It jumped 10 percent in fiscal year 1981 and appears to be rising at an equal rate this year.

That, if nothing else, should make advertising mail very important to postal employees. But if you need more evidence, consider this recent finding: In a year, a person who responds to a piece of advertising mail can generate at least 12 pieces of First-Class Mail, 13 pieces of third-class mail and eight pieces of fourth-class mail.

The remarkable growth of the direct mail sales industry demonstrates that a significant number of people look forward to receiving advertising mail. The industry reports that mail order sales are expected to top $40 billion this year and are growing at the rate of 15 percent a year—twice as fast as retail sales.

Thinking of retiring? If you want to make sure your spouse continues to be eligible for survivor benefits after you retire, you must accept a reduced annuity with survivor benefits when you apply for retirement.

Before making your decision, you should be aware that the choice made by a married employee at the time of retirement is binding. It cannot be changed after it is accepted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). However, if the marriage terminates (or ends) before the retired employee dies, the reduction in the annuity may be eliminated. On the other hand, the decision of an employee who is not married at the time of retirement may be changed if the employee marries and notifies OPM no later than one year after the marriage.

If you do not want your spouse's survivor annuity benefits to continue after you retire, you must request—in writing—an annuity without survivor benefits. The law re-

continued

KEEPING POSTED *continued*

quires that your spouse be notified of this decision.

Regardless of your decision, your children's survivor annuity benefit entitlement continues after you retire, provided the children meet the conditions of age and dependency listed below.

Survivor annuity benefits are death benefits paid, under certain conditions, to a deceased employee's or retiree's surviving spouse and children. They may also be payable to a person having an insurable interest named by an unmarried employee at the time of retirement.

If you have completed 18 months of creditable service and you should die while employed in a position covered by the retirement system, your spouse and/or your dependent children may be eligible for a survivor annuity, provided the following conditions are met:

A spouse must have been married to the employee or retiree for at least one year immediately preceding the employee's death, or the parent of a child born of the current (if there has been more than one) marriage.

Dependent children, including those legally adopted, must be unmarried and under the age of 18 (or under the age of 22 and a student pursuing a full-time course of study in a recognized educational institution). Under certain conditions, unmarried children over 18 years of age incapable of self-support and dependent step-children or recognized natural children under the age of 18 may also qualify for a survivor annuity.

If you have questions on this subject, bring them to the personnel or employee relations office in your facility.

A national salute to the 2.7 million Americans who served in Viet Nam and a tribute to the 58,000 who died in the nation's longest war will take place November 10-14 in Washington, DC. Highlights of the event, sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, will be military unit reunions and a parade down Constitution Avenue toward the site of the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial, which will be dedicated November 13. The five day gathering will conclude with a service at the National Cathedral, one of the thousands expected to take place around the nation.

"How I Stopped Dieting and Lost Weight" is the headline planned for an article scheduled to appear in in an early November issue of *Family Circle* just in time for the holidays. Written by Santa Rosa, CA, distribution clerk Sharon Greene Patton, the material is an excerpt from her book, *Dieting Makes You Fat.* The book is currently under consideration by publishers, so *Family Circle's* 20 million readers will have first crack at reading Patton's explanation of why calorie counting doesn't add up to weight loss for some of us. A former English instructor at San Francisco State University and advertising copywriter for the *San Francisco Examiner,* Patton joined the Postal Service in 1980.

If you or your customers are sending Christmas gifts by surface mail to Australia, the Far East, Southeast Asia, Southeast Africa or West Africa, the packages should be mailed no later than October 25. That's the first of the suggested "deadlines" for holiday surface mail headed overseas. A list of dates for dispatching surface mail to other destinations and dates for sending air mail letters, cards and parcels appears in the September 2 *Postal Bulletin.*

The Postal Service no longer establishes such dates for domestic mailings: Research showed that the practice created unnecessary fears that letters and packages sent after the deadline would not arrive on time. Replacing the domestic deadline is the gentle reminder you'll start seeing shortly in public service advertising: "Don't Miss the Joy. Shop early. Mail early."

This fall look for more emphasis on quality control in connection with the handling of undeliverable-as-addressed mail.

The increased attention to UAA mail in delivery units will be aimed at improving quality control over all categories of mail. But it will also be the first of a series of improvements planned for how we handle second- and third-class mail.

A task force recently developed a laundry list of changes needed in postal acceptance, transportation, mail processing and delivery operations. In addition, it recommended a number of improvements in how customers prepare the mail, among them:

- Standardizing formats for addresses and mailer instructions or endorsements; and
- Identifying reasons for illegible or erroneous mailing labels and mailer-caused misdirected mail and educating mailers to correct the mistakes.

The planned improvements to postal operations include:

- Placing additional emphasis on better training, staffing and supporting equipment in acceptance and verification units;
- Taking steps to eliminate unwarranted delays before or after required distribution;
- Developing methods to alert operating units of the volume and make-up of non-preferential mail they can expect;
- Identifying and eliminating transportation related failures;
- Greater use of mechanization to process third-class flats and letter mail; and
- Establishing procedures to ensure that bulk mail shipments are processed and delivered in the sequence of receipt.

The task force said these changes will help to eliminate errors that cause delays and extra handlings—an objective that becomes especially important in connection with the anticipated volume growth.

MAKING THE BIG MOVE

In the dead of night August 7, an unusual truck convoy pulled away from Postal Service Headquarters in Washington. Security was tight.

From 2 a.m., when the last of the convoy's cargo was loaded and postal inspectors sealed the trucks, technicians accompanying the trucks were in constant contact via CB radio. Major post offices between Washington and the convoy's destination were on alert to provide backup security should anything go wrong.

What did the convoy carry? Gold? Cash? Priceless art?

Would you believe 27,000 computer tapes?

In the Postal Services's increasingly high-tech environment, the information stored on computer tapes is an indispensable resource. You name it—payroll information, personnel data, mail volume statistics—it's probably on tape.

The 27,000 reels of electronic data loaded on those trucks in early August amounted, in effect, to a hefty chunk of the Postal Service's organizational memory. And transplanting this chunk of memory from the Washington Automatic Data Processing Center to its new home, the USPS National Information Resource Center in Raleigh, NC, amounted to a precision maneuver.

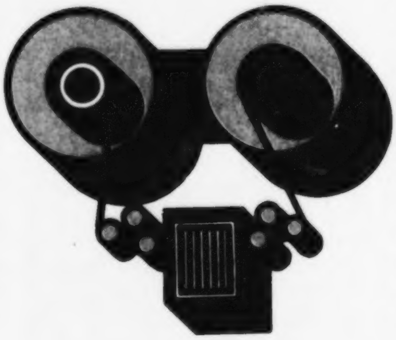
You might compare it to brain surgery: one serious slip of the scalpel and whole blocks of a patient's memory can be wiped out. In the same way, if anything had happened to the computer tapes en route to Raleigh, the Postal Service would experience equally disastrous memory gaps.

Several weeks before the move, Bob Stephens, the Raleigh Center's director, appeared a bit apprehensive. Information stored on the tapes was in demand almost to the last minute. "To say that we will move all the tapes to the Center and start right up without any loss of service," he joked, "is a little like Custer before Little Big Horn ordering his troops not to take prisoners."

As it happened, the move was executed without a hitch. Indeed, the entire operation was typical of the work performed for the Postal Service by Information Resource Management—an outfit better known by the initials IRM.

IRM is one of those organizations within the Postal Service which you may not have heard of, but which you can't do without.

It is made up of some 2,600 people—most of them programmers, systems analysts, and computer operators. They staff the Service's eight data processing centers, design and maintain the Service's computer systems, and do other non-trivial things such as process your paycheck and see that it gets to you every two weeks.



The most intriguing work of IRM, however, is taking place under the code name "Business Systems Plan"—BSP for short. BSP is an ambitious data automation project that will eventually revolutionize the way the Postal Service does business.

Over the next few years, powerful computers will be installed in Postal Service facilities across the country. And employees—from window-unit clerks right up to the Postmaster General—will be provided with terminals and television-like devices that they can use to communicate with those computers.

Guided by the BSP blueprint, IRM is now overseeing construction of eight massive information systems for: Production; Marketing; Personnel; Finance; Corporate Management; Equipment and Buildings; Technology and Support; and Management Services.

When these systems are in place, practically the entire Postal Service will be "online"—using computers to get work done more accurately and efficiently.

Window clerks will use computer terminals to research rates and to perform their daily accounting chores. Budgets will be developed with the aid of computers. Supply inventories will be tracked by computer. There is no limit to the applications.

What's more, the eight BSP systems and their 63 subsystems will not stand in isolation. IRM is designing them so that they can "talk" to and "learn" from each other. As the 63 subsystems exchange data, the range and capability of each will be boosted.

If this sounds futuristic, think again. The future is just around the corner. And when it comes, we'll be ready for it, thanks to flawless moves such as the one that took place one hot night in August. ■ *—Jim Whitmire*

POSTAL PERSONALITIES

Charles Stout, Jean Todd and D.F. Hill

It has to be a love of horses—not money—that binds together the four Lexington, KY, postal people who raise, breed, train and race a stable of nine thoroughbreds.

Members of the loosely-knit partnership share chores and expenses but don't make rules, keep books or even have a name for their joint enterprise. Their first attempt at formalizing their relationship came only this summer: After their filly, Beautiful Stand, won $1,800 at River Downs racetrack in July, they opened a bank account.

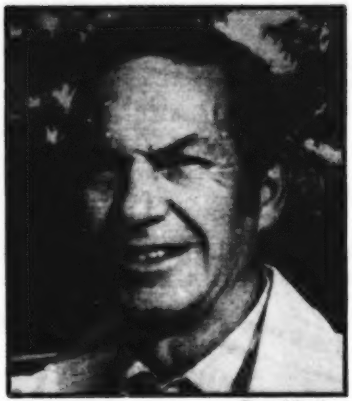
Belonging to this heterogeneous quartet are Charles (Charlie) Stout, an MPLSM supervisor; Dorris F. (DF) Hill, a city carrier; John Parks, a recently retired mail handler; and Jean Todd, a tour superintendent. Their horse population consists of three brood mares, Caribbean Girl, the dam of Hail Girl, a filly soon to run her first race; Sailing Beauty, the dam of Beautiful Stand and a colt they call "Devil Don't Care"; and Jessamine Creek. Each mare also has a "baby on the ground" and is in foal again. Some of the horses have one owner; others have two or even three owners, but they are all tended and cared for like one big, happy horse family.

Stout founded the venture about 10 years ago when he was working with an organization that sells thoroughbreds. At the track, he struck up a friendship with Parks which developed into a comfortable personal and working relationship. Stout cares for the brood mares and foals at the barn and lets them run on Parks' five-acre pasture while Parks looks after the racing stock stabled at the training center. Sometime during those years Stout got acquainted with DF—Dorris Hill—who owns a greenhouse. Now, to see how the greenhouse fits into the scheme of things, you have to get past some gray areas that only Stout and Hill understand. It seems at the end of the year there is a financial exchange depending on how much the greenhouse has earned, how much the stable needs and a number of other handshake-type variables.

Then, about two years ago, Jean Todd moved down from Gary, IN, and attended her first horserace. Enthralled, she quickly embraced the whole bluegrass horseracing scene and gravitated toward those who make it happen.

"Her hand doesn't fit the pitchfork too well," says Stout, "so we fenced in a part of the paddock where she could make a garden." Todd takes her turn at pitching manure, but spends a good share of her after-work hours setting out and cultivating plants (that have had their start in Hill's greenhouse) and everyone benefits from the harvest. She also plans to pay the boarding fee this month. "I think it's my turn," she remarks casually.

There are other transactions that seem somewhat vague to outsiders but perfectly workable to those involved. Take veterinary fees for instance. Stout, who handles shots for the horses and presides at foaling time, also assists the local vet periodically. This means the group seldom gets a veterinary bill. And recently Stout eliminated another troublesome expense: According to Kentucky State Racing Commission rules, only licensed trainers can saddle horses for a race. Each time the group hired someone to do this it cost them dearly—and sent a twinge of resentment right into Charlie Stout's heart. In August, however, Stout got his trainer's license, and when Beautiful Stand ran at Latonia racetrack September 7, Stout, for the first time, proudly "threw his own saddle."■



Gary Martin

You could say Gary Martin's invention was bound to win. An improved version of the clinch knot, it recently earned the $2,500 top prize offered by a fishing line manufacturer looking for a new, easy-to-tie knot. In June, Martin's contest entry was selected from nearly 500 others by a panel of nationally known outdoor sports writers at the World's Fair in Knoxville.

The 48-year-old window clerk from Lafayette, IN, says he never really expected his creation to become the "World's Fair Knot." He describes himself as an occasional angler who has been fishing only about 10 years. "I've been using the improved clinch knot for a long time," he says, "and came up with this new knot one night while experimenting at my kitchen table."

For the Du Pont Company's Stren fishing line division, Martin's invention ended a 10-month search for a knot that would serve a particular need. As a company official explains, fishing line made of nylon monofilament is so tough that it tends to cut through itself if a knot does not have the right amount of cushioning and is not properly tied.

After weeding the entries down to 31 finalists, the judges tied and retied samples, subjected them to tests of tensile strength, and gave them the ultimate rod-and-reel test at lakeside. They acclaimed the World's Fair Knot as "very quick and easy to tie. Anyone can master it with a few minutes' practice." If you'd like to find out for yourself, write *Postal Life* for illustrated directions. ■

Ana Ortega, a nurse in the San Juan, PR, General Post Office, spent three weeks of her vacation last summer sifting sand under a broiling sun. As part of a 50-member archaeological expedition to the Tel Batash excavation in Israel, she unearthed a wine jar and two chalices and, in the process, earned four credits toward a master's degree in theology.

A part-time divinity student, Ortega chose Tel Batash from a wealth of expeditions advertised in *Biblical Archaeology Review*. "It was the only package where you didn't have to sleep in tents," she says. The tel (mound) was opened five years ago to uncover the ancient community of Timnah, where Samson's first wife grew up.

Before starting the dig, the expedition members (ages eight to 80) were treated to a tour of archaeological points of interest from Dan to Beersheba. They viewed Temptation Mountain from Jericho—the oldest continuously inhabited city of the world—saw Joseph's tomb, Mt. Carmel and the valley of Armageddon, and swam in the sea of Galilee.

At the excavation, the group settled into a daily routine. Since the temperature made it impossible to work after noon, a light breakfast served at 3 a.m. was followed by work at the site, a huge breakfast at 8 a.m., and more work until 11:30 a.m.

Ortega's find—the wine jug and chalice—came at the end of her second week at the site. It was hailed as useful in helping to date the wall surrounding Timnah.

By the time she hopped a bus for Cairo the next week, on the first leg of the homeward journey, Ortega's hard work had brought her four college credits (two As). And in her suitcase was a T-shirt that reads "Timnah—Samson dug it, so did I." ■

Ana Ortega

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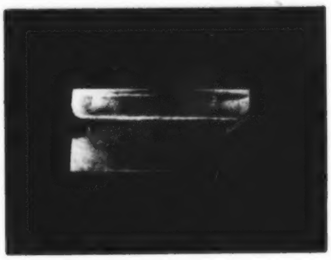
POSTMASTERS
When an employee moves, please remind that person to fill out PS form 1216 (Employee's Current Mailing Address) and to submit it to the personnel office in the post office where he works, making certain the employee's Social Security Number and the office's finance number are included. Do not send change to address to Postal Life.

CONTENTS



2 **OF MAIL PLANES AND MULE TRAINS**
A plucky band of contractors help the Postal Service bring mail to the most remote areas of our nation

6 **GETTING ALONG WITH AUTOMATION**
The Postal Service began introducing wide-scale use of automated equipment this fall. How will this step affect postal employees and why is it being taken?

8 **JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS**
A host of activities and new philatelic issues highlighted this year's National Card and Letter-Writing Week and National Stamp Collecting Month.

10 **THIS IS PITTSBURGH PHIL**
A postal employee reminisces about his friend, Roberto Clemente, who is soon to be the subject of a commemorative stamp.

12 **CARRIER / FARRIER**
A 68-year-old letter carrier uses his U.S. Calvary training to make the shoe fit

15 **ANSWERS AND WINNERS TO THE DOG BITE PREVENTION CONTEST**

16 **WHO ARE WE?**
Statistics paint a fascinating—if imperfect—picture of the postal workforce and the "average" employee.

18 **DRUG BUST**
Illegal drug use is haunting the nation's workplaces and endangering employees. The Postal Inspection Service intends to put a stop to this threat.

19 **KEEPING POSTED**

21 **MAKING THE BIG MOVE**
A smooth trip carries USPS memories to Raleigh, NC, and symbolizes the steps we're taking into the computer age.

22 **POSTAL PERSONALITIES**
A nurse in Puerto Rico digs for ancient artifacts, Kentucky employees race horses and an Indiana clerk ties the "World's Fair Knot."

On the cover: Ray Arnold and a Cessna 206 are the "letter carriers" for ranchers in the wilderness areas of Idaho. In winter he equips his plane with skis and continues to make his stops in cow pastures, canyons and clearings in the woods.
Cover photograph by Patrick S. McCabe

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WE DELIVER CHRISTMAS WITH SPIRIT!

see page 2

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HEALTH INSURANCE?

see page 6

P 1.43:

WE DELIVER CHRISTMAS WITH SPIRIT!

Season's Greetings

Christmas is a very special time for the Postal Service. Whether it is carrying greetings to cities across the country, dispatching packages to every nation in the world, or delivering gifts to the smallest towns in the America, we touch people's lives.

Times have changed since the Postal Service nearly had to double its workforce to handle additional Christmas mail. In 1952, the Postal Service hired more than 400,000 Christmas casuals. Last year, fewer than 10,000 casuals were needed to handle the extra one billion pieces of mail delivered during the holiday period.

A good indication of how much things have changed is the new thrust of our Christmas Mail Early promotion, which encourages people to remember old friends during the holiday season. Using the theme "Don't Miss the Joy," our advertisements are designed to urge use of mail as well as to remind people to mail early.

For the past few years, post offices all over the country have sponsored programs and events to promote holiday mailings. Some of the promotional ideas used last year included giant mailboxes, Santas delivering the mail, oversized cards, and television cartoon characters. ■

1. Decorations across the front of the building greet customers of the New York City General Post Office.

2. An LSM operator in the Philadelphia Post Office tries to keep her mind on business while Santa wishes her a Merry Christmas.

3. The Boston Postal Chorus sings carols in the lobby of the federal building in Boston.

4. Volunteers from the Tampa, FL, Post Office help collect money and toys for needy children in a local shopping center.

5. A mobile stamp unit carries the "Shop and Mail Early" message to customers in St. Louis, MO.

6. Standing in "snow" made especially for the occasion, a customer purchases stamps from a giant mailbox in front of the Houston Post Office.

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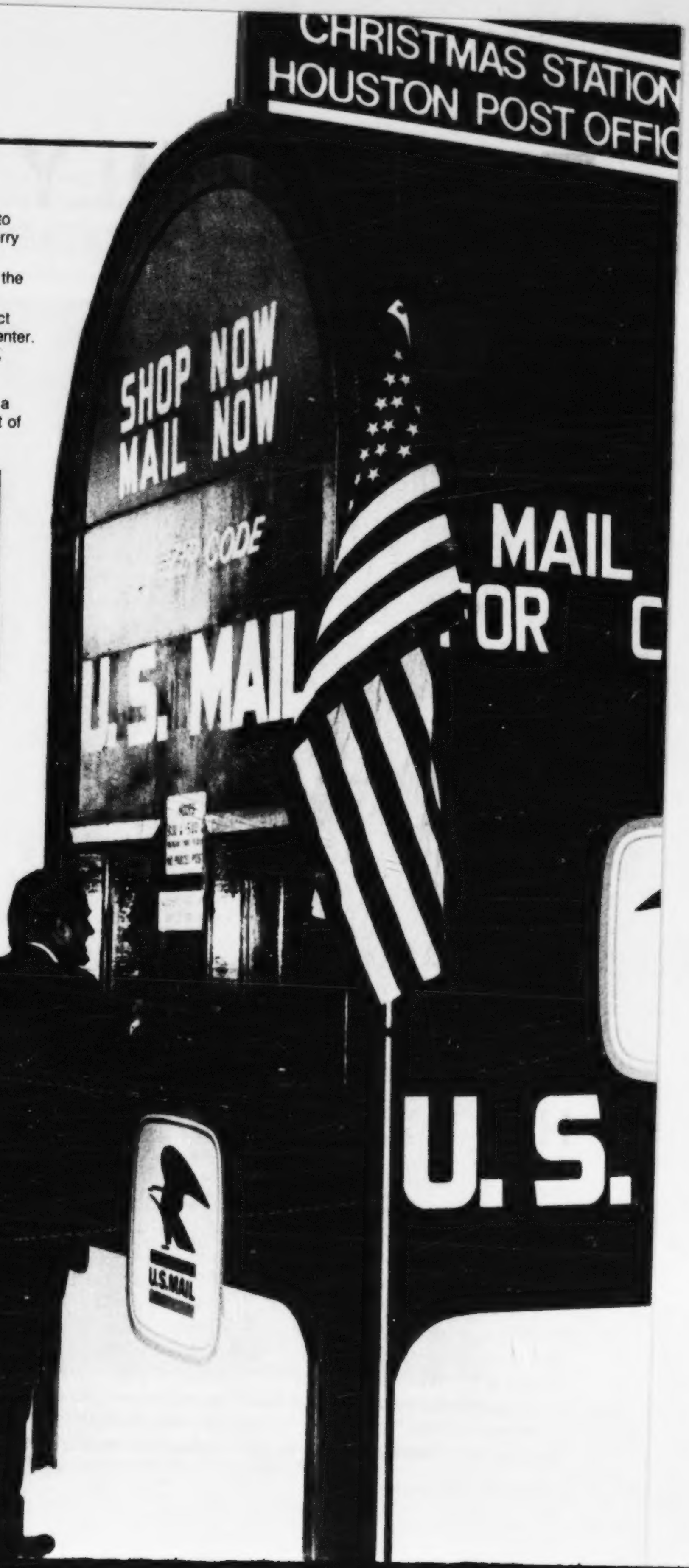
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THE FAMILY MAN

Collecting kids is a specialty for CSR Joe DeAngelis and his wife, Annette. At last count they had nine.

His wife calls him "Super Dad" and the children call him "Super Hero," but Joe DeAngelis, a customer service representative in Boise, ID, claims he is neither. He says he's just passing on the kind of parenting he received from his own mother and father.

"I realize many children never have the opportunity for love and care that I had," he says. That's why, even before they were married, DeAngelis and his dark-haired wife, Annette, decided they wanted lots of children—enough to fill an orphanage. Economic realities have scaled down their dream, but they always seem to have room for one more person in need of love and care.

Their family includes four natural children—Marie, 12, Amy, 11, Joseph, 9, and Tom, 4. Then there are three others they adopted—Aaron, 7, Ava, 6, and Ellen, 4. And they are the legal guardians of Chris and Mike, 15-year-old twins.

Aaron, the first adopted child, is a Vietnamese boy who came on the "baby lift" just before U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended. His arrival was something of a miracle. In his brief life, the malnourished baby had contracted pneumonia, scarlet fever, croup, measles, scabies, malaria, and salmonella, and had three times received last rites in a Vietnamese hospital. Now he is the picture of health. Ellen, with a cleft lip and palate, was six weeks old and had been passed over several times when the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK S. McCABE

DeAngelis family fell in love with her. She is a shy little girl with blond pigtails, but has become outgoing enough to take part in a recent local presentation of "The King and I." Ava was an abused child. Part of her head was crushed when she was 20 months old, and she was partially paralyzed on one side. Her new parents were told she had an IQ of 21 and would never be functional.

"But we decided there was something more there," says DeAngelis. "We led Ava through exercises designed to make her use the muscles she had neglected. Within a year she was talking normally, had a normal IQ and successfully completed kindergarten."

Mike and Chris joined the family in August 1982. About two years ago, their mother had sent the boys to live with their father in Sierra Leone, West Africa. When the arrangement didn't seem to be working out, their grandmother wrote to DeAngelis about their difficulties. Now they're happily becoming typical American kids again, enrolled in a local high school.

DeAngelis has had first-hand experience in overcoming disabilities that has helped him empathize with his adopted children. After he was shot 15 times in Vietnam, he was found with his left arm attached to the shoulder only by skin. Doctors wanted to amputate, but he ordered them to sew the arm on—a wise decision because he then rehabilitated himself to the point where he could golf and ski again.

Returning to the United States, DeAngelis married Annette and they took up parenting as soon as possible. Six years ago he moved his family from California to a 2½ acre homestead in Boise. Activities there are family-oriented, often including the children of friends.

Several years ago, the couple agreed to sponsor two Vietnamese refugees. When the placement agency increased the number to seven, the couple never hesitated. They kept the family for 2½ months, found jobs for the adults, taught them English and how to shop. The families have remained close friends.

Immersing himself in Little League baseball, Cub Scout campouts, trips to Disneyland and horse shows has meant that DeAngelis has had to postpone golf and sports cars. Instead of fishing, he keeps busy baiting and unsnagging children's lines. But he says he's gotten back more than he's given in terms of love.

"My parents set a good example. They were loving and hugging, and my dad was not afraid to show emotion. I think hugging does a lot of good things for kids. It makes them feel warm and loved and special." ■

(Top) Older family members see the younger children off on an adventurous ride. (Bottom) DeAngelis dishes up spaghetti, cafateria style, just before the outing.

(Opposite page) Four-year-old Tom DeAngelis shares a bumper car ride with his dad while on a family trip to the Western Idaho State Fair in Boise.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HEALTH INSURANCE?

We're facing another sharp increase in premiums and a look at the future shows more of the same. But there are ways we can defend both our health and our pocketbooks—especially during Open Season.

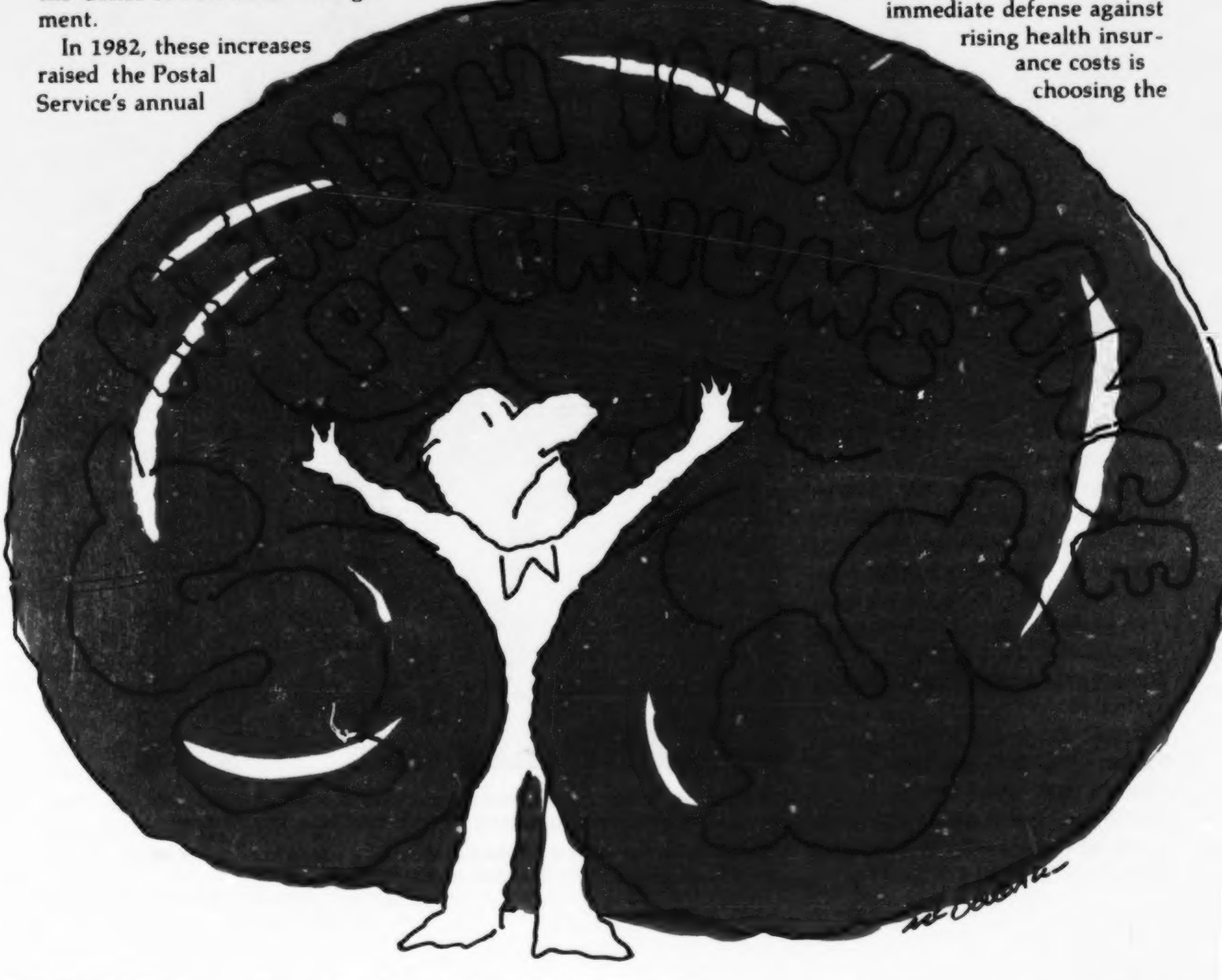
In September, the Postal Service decided to study the feasibility of offering its own alternative to the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Program.

The move followed repeated premium hikes in the program that covers federal and postal employees and is administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

In 1982, these increases raised the Postal Service's annual contribution to the FEHB program to more than $600 million—which is the revenue we generate with each penny of First-Class postage.

For employees, 1982 premiums rose an average 31 percent—nearly one-third—and bought less coverage. The Office of Personnel Management said that health care costs would have driven rates still higher without some curtailment of benefits. Now we've been told to brace for another average increase of 24 percent in January.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, the Postal Service will explore the feasibility of sponsoring a voluntary health insurance plan. In the meantime, our most immediate defense against rising health insurance costs is choosing the



insurance that is most advantageous for ourselves and our families during the upcoming open season. In the long term, however, we all need to guard against the factors that are making health care costs a national crisis.

Open Season

The opportunity to choose a new health plan or change your current one began November 22 and goes through December 10 of this year. Open Season is the *only* time during the year when all employees are permitted to change health plans.

Now is the time to examine your current health plan and make informed choices about health benefits.

Health costs soar

The primary reason for the dramatic increase in premium rates is the 10-fold rise in the cost of health care in the past two decades. Health care that cost Americans $27 billion in 1960 set them back $275 billion last year. In 1971, the average stay in a hospital cost $670; just 10 years later the bill for that same stay totaled $2,119.

Health care costs have been a major contributor to inflation and continue to rise even though the rate of inflation is slowing down. One dollar of every 10 generated in this country now goes for medical care, and if nothing changes, experts think health care could absorb as many as three dollars out of every 10 by the end of this decade. That, in essence, is the crux of the problem. But what has caused these dramatic increases?

Only the best will do

A general attitude that price is no object in health care is one of the reasons for spiraling health costs. Doctors often order too many tests, and patients are shy about asking if they're necessary. People are put in the hospital needlessly or kept too long, and more and more expensive technology is demanded.

Until now, people have been reluctant to raise the question of limits on health care costs, equating such limits with substandard care. When it comes to their health, people do not want "cut-rate" medicine. Compounding the problem is the fact that people who are ill, or who have family members who are ill, are usually not in any emotional or physical state to discuss costs. What's happening now is that the pain in their pocketbook is beginning to make consumers realize that price comparisons are wise —and should be done *before* illness threatens.

Spare no expense

Another reason for rising health care costs has been the fact that there are few incentives for either the provider or the patient to save money. The system generally encourages a spare-no-expense attitude because of the mistaken belief that someone else is paying the bill.

Hospitals have few incentives to cut costs because they are paid by insurance companies, and if they raise their costs, the insurance company raises its level of payment and passes that increase onto the employee and employer in the form of higher premiums. Fraud on the part of health care providers and consumers also plays a role in inflating costs.

No matter what the causes are, consumers ultimately pay. If not for the immediate hospital bill, they pay in higher insurance costs, higher taxes and higher prices for goods because the cost of the company's contribution to workers' premiums is passed onto the consumer. One study reported this year in *The New York Times* estimated that employee health benefits add $315 to the cost of a General Motors automobile.

Keeping costs down

Are there ways to reduce or at least slow down the rise in the cost of medical insurance and health benefits? Various solutions have been proposed, both by government and by the medical profession, including encouraging competition and cost-saving incentives, stay-well plans, hospital mergers to save duplication of services, co-insurance, deductibles and preferred provider health care groups.

What can we do?

All of us have it in our power to do something about helping to slow the rate of increase in health care costs. Here are a few suggestions:

Discuss fees with your doctor—in advance whenever possible—and reach an agreement with him or her about the charge and what it is for. Also, when obtaining a prescription from your doctor, ask about generic drugs instead of more costly trademark brands.

Check your hospital and doctor bills to be sure you received the exact services for which you are billed. Errors do occur in billing.

Keep complete and accurate records of your expenses. Make sure all bills are itemized and that records are kept for each family member. This can help with figuring income tax deductions as well as insurance claims.

continued

Know your plan's benefits and claims procedures. Fill out forms accurately and completely in accordance with your plan's instructions. Unnecessary correspondence and duplication of forms increase the cost of administering your plan.

Get a second opinion—most experts agree that you should get a second opinion whenever costly medical treatment is in your future. Another opinion could not only save you money, but could also save you pain and suffering. Unnecessary surgery and treatments are done every day, and another expert might propose a less drastic alternative for you. Remember, doctors are not always right and effectiveness is not always related to price. Many health plans pay for a second opinion and a third if the first two disagree.

Be informed. Informed choices about your options can save you time, money and possible catastrophe.

Some tips on how to find the best buy in health insurance for you and your family

Costs differ

Health plans do not all cost the same, and the costs differ for many reasons, but mainly because of the difference in benefits. Also affecting premium costs is the kind of patient the plan appeals to. If the plan attracts people who want a high dental option, for example, the expense for that dental option must be paid for by premiums.

How well a plan is managed also figures into its cost. If it is efficiently run, costs will be less than for a plan that has high administrative costs. Use of deductibles and coinsurance can also lower the cost of a health plan. When people must pay part of the expenses for their medical care, they tend to be more cautious.

The area in which you live also affects the cost of premiums. It costs more for medical care in San Francisco or Honolulu than it does in Auburn, NC. Thus, premiums are higher in those areas.

Don't choose a health plan just because it is the most expensive (and thus, you think, the best) or because it is the least expensive. Price should be only one of your concerns when selecting the best plan for you and your family.

Two types of plans

Basically two types of health insurance are available: fee-for-service insurance and prepaid health insurance. Fee-for-service insurance pays directly to your doctor or hospital for your medical expenses or reimburses you for these payments. These plans are primarily designed to protect you from major expenses and do not always cover routine medical expenses. The government wide plans, such as Blue

HEALTH INSURANCE
PREMIUMS

Shield and Aetna, and most plans sponsored by employee organizations are included in this type of insurance.

Group-practice prepayment plans, sometimes called Health Maintenance Organizations, or HMOs, provide for your *total* medical care. A flat fee is paid for virtually all benefits and services; however, these services are available *only* through the plan's doctors, hospitals and outside specialists to whom you may be referred. There are no forms to fill out and few, if any, out-of-pocket costs with this type of plan. You are assured predictable medical expenses for you and your family. Because the plan pays the entire cost of your health care, it tries to provide this care at a minimum cost. By controlling unnecessary or inappropriate care and practicing preventative medicine, it can often offer a more comprehensive range of benefits than many other insurance plans.

When deciding whether to select an HMO plan, keep in mind that, although you can have a regular doctor with such a plan, you cannot go to a doctor who is not affiliated with it. If you currently have a doctor whom you want to keep, another type of plan might be better for you. Another point to consider: Since you are limited to treatment in plan facilities, if you travel a lot, you should make sure your plan covers emergency treatment in out-of-service areas.

Selecting a health plan

From these two major types of insurance, the Federal Employees Health Benefits program offers many different plans. Which type of insurance and which plan you select should depend on many factors, including your financial position, family situation, age, sex, medical history, geographical location and even your attitude toward any risk involved.

To choose the right plan for you and your family, you must carefully consider the different options in relation to the above factors. For example, if your financial situation is such that you can afford to pay regular doctor bills and short-term medical expenses, you might consider a plan with a higher deductible and larger coinsurance payments—and a lower premium. However, if you have four children and even a $500 medical expense would be difficult for you to pay, you would want to choose a full coverage plan.

Your family situation is also important. Are you planning a family? If so, pregnancy and routine pediatric benefits would be important to you. If you have children at that "cavity-prone" age, your need for dental coverage might be different from someone who is older and lives alone.

Your medical history and general health play a role in health plan choice. If you have a condition which requires medication, prescription coverage would be important. For example, if you are a diabetic, you would want to make sure your plan covers syringes and insulin.

Age is extremely important in determining your choice. Elderly persons will have, on an average, health-related bills of more than $2,000 per year, while children's bills average about $400. If you are older, or have older people under your care, these are factors to consider.

If you are 65 or over, and Medicare picks up part of your medical costs, make sure you are not overpaying for insurance. You would want a plan that supplements Medicare. On the other hand, since older people are more prone to long-term illness, you would want to make sure that you have good catastrophic illness coverage. Will your insurance cover long-term hospital stays and nursing home care?

In choosing any insurance plan, a risk factor is involved. How much are you willing to risk, or can you afford to risk? If you end up paying, year after year, more in premiums than you are gaining in extra benefits, you might want to consider a higher deductible. It is not cost-effective to go on paying premiums for a high option if those premiums are costing you more than you are receiving in benefits. However, you need to consider your ability to pay this deductible if something should happen.

Know your options!

No matter what plan you choose, the important thing is to know your options. Examine your own situation and know why you are choosing a particular plan. Don't be surprised later when your plan doesn't cover something you thought it did.

Before making a final decision about your health plan, talk to someone in your personnel office. If you are interested in a specific plan, read the plan brochure carefully. Do not rely solely on the plan comparison chart.

Some additional booklets, available in your personnel office, which might help you make a better choice are the FEHB Enrollment Information & Plan Comparison Charts (BRI 41-331) and the Biweekly Rate Booklets (BRI 41-212 PS).

You may also find the following publications helpful:

Checkbook's Guide to Health

continued

Insurance Plans for Federal Employees, 1982 Open Season. Available for $3.95 from *Checkbook* magazine, 1518 K Street, N.W., Suite 406, Washington, DC 20005. Includes cost comparison tables, likely out-of-pocket costs, analysis of enrollees complaints and general advice on how to choose a plan.

Your Medicare Handbook, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration. Ask your local Social Security office to send you a copy (Publication No. 05-10050.)

Make sure that you take advantage of all available information on how to keep your health insurance from becoming a burden instead of a boon. ■

—Sharon Greene Patton

Glossary of terms

Catastrophic benefits—benefits to cover large, unexpected medical expenses that could wipe a family out financially. Always consider the extent of this benefit when choosing a plan. Most HMOs include catastrophic benefits.

Coinsurance—when this term is used, it means that you will be sharing the costs of your medical care with your health plan. The plan will pay a certain percentage of covered expenses and you will pay the rest.

Copayment—usually a fixed dollar amount you must pay for a service provided by a plan. For example, some plans charge a $2 fee for a doctor's visit or $50 per hospital visit.

Deductible—the amount you must pay before benefits begin. For example, if you have a $200 deductible, you must pay that amount in medical bills yourself before your insurance will begin to pay. For details on a plan's deductible and how it works, see the plan brochure.

Covered charges—the actual amount of charges allowed by the plan (excluding deductible or coinsurance).

Double coverage—some health expenses might be covered by more than one plan; for example, you might also be covered by Medicare. Most health plans have specific rules on what benefits apply when there is overlapping coverage.

Dual enrollment—this refers to current coverage under two enrollments in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program which could occur if you were covered under your spouse's plan. Dual coverage is illegal and you should report it to your personnel office for correction if it applies to you.

Exclusion—this refers to something *not* covered in your plan.

Limitation—refers to something which is not *totally* covered or not *always* covered.

Medically necessary—each plan has its own definition of what is necessary. Generally, if the service is not required to safeguard your health or to provide good medical care, the plan will not pay for it. Do not assume that all services recommended by a doctor will be covered. If you are not sure whether something is covered, check to see if your plan will pay *before* you incur the expense.

Copayment
Limitation
Options
Exclusion
Usual
Reasonable
Customary

Open Season—the period when employees may enroll in or may change plans, options or types of enrollment. An open season is usually held once a year in November. Note: you may cancel your enrollment or change to Self Only at any time. These are not considered open season changes.

Option—some of the plans offer two levels of benefits. The *low option* provides limited benefits at a reduced price, while the *high option* contains more coverage and costs more. Where plans have a single option, you may consider it a high option.

Preferred provider—a plan where participants receive lower prices by using a doctor or hospital on the preferred list.

Premium—the total cost of your health benefits coverage. Employee organization plans usually require you to become a member of the organization, which could mean additional charges in membership dues.

Usual, customary and reasonable charges—most plans will pay only what they consider reasonable charges. They usually determine this by comparing costs with other like services. If the plan does not pay the entire charge, you must pay the rest. This is another reason to find out *in advance* what something is going to cost. ■

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Say hello to McGruff, the "spokesdog" for the national Crime Prevention Coalition. The Postal Service has joined the coalition so that all employees can benefit from the information he has to offer on "how to take a bite out of crime."

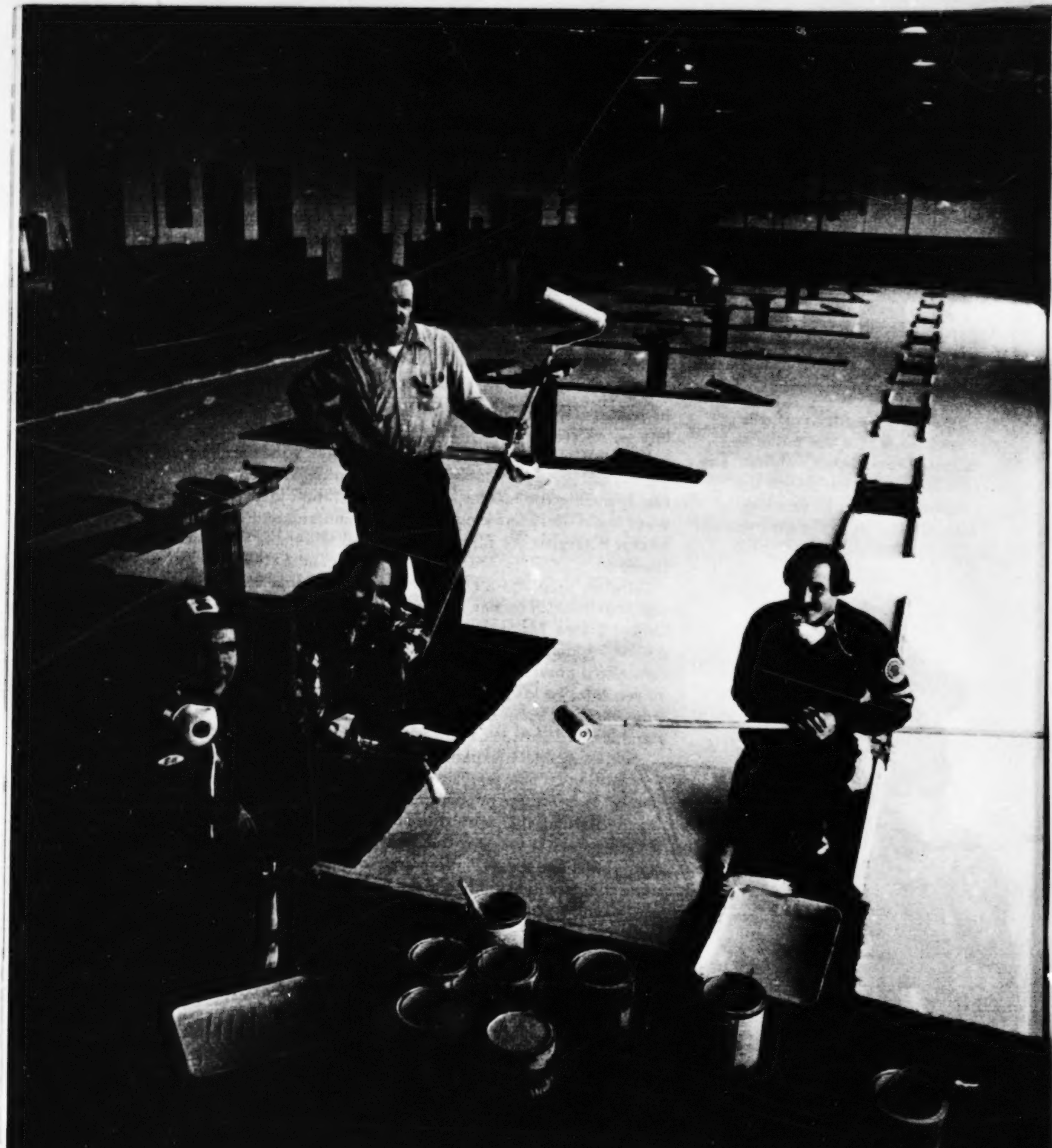
McGruff's advice on preventing burglaries is particularly timely during the holiday season when we're busy stocking our homes with gifts for family and friends.

Burglary accounts for about one-fourth of all crimes in the United States. More than 3 million residential burglaries are committed annually, one every 10 seconds. To keep your home from showing up in next year's statistics, McGruff recommends some sensible, inexpensive precautions. "You see," he says, most burglars are opportunistic amateurs who thrive on those of us who make it easy for them to enter, steal and escape." Here are some things you can do to make your home a tougher target for burglars:

- Install lights at all entry points to eliminate dark areas where burglars can work unnoticed.
- Trim trees and bushes so that neighbors and police patrols can spot intruders around doors and windows.
- Equip your doors with one-inch-throw deadbolt locks.
- Keep doors locked whether you are at home or away.
- Drill holes through casement windows where the bottom and top sashes overlap and insert an 8-penny nail.
- Secure patio doors with a strip of wood placed in the bottom track (to prevent sliding) and screws placed in the top track (to prevent the door from being lifted out).
- Use large visible house numbers so that police can quickly locate your house in an emergency.
- Don't keep excess cash and jewelry or other gold or silver items around the house. These items belong in a safe deposit box.
- Ask your local law enforcement department about Operation Identification. You can obtain an identifying number that will make valuables easier to trace and a sticker to put in your window that will announce this fact to would-be burglars.
- If you are an apartment dweller, change the locks as soon as you move in and never give keys to delivery persons or repair persons.

Booklets that target specific types of crime are available from the Crime Prevention Coalition, Post Office Box 6700, Rockville, MD 20850. "Got a minute? You could stop a crime" is an overview booklet, available in English and Spanish. It covers basic facts about a variety of the most frequent and harmful crimes. Other booklets are:

How to Crimeproof Your Home
How to Be "Streetwise"—and Safe
How to Protect Yourself Against Sexual Assault
Senior Citizens Against Crime
How Not to Get Conned
How to Crimeproof Your Business
Arson—How Not to Get Burned
How to Protect Your Neighborhood
How to Prevent Rural Crime
How Your Organization Can Take Action Against Crime ■



AN OVERHAUL FOR OUR VMFS

A little preventive maintenance has paid off in a better-than-new image for the people who keep the mail on the move

At the end of Tour I when Jesse Cook rolls his tractor-trailer into the Atlanta Vehicle Maintenance facility, he carefully pulls up at a special island at the gas pump. It's been designed so that his tractor's tall exhaust stack can't stain the building's clean, white ceiling. Later, he vacuums out the truck's interior and washes the windows, leaving the cab neat and clean for the Tour II driver.

"The other driver does the same for me," beams Cook, a Motor Vehicle Service driver for 14 years. "But I can remember a time when my cab would be so dirty from the mechanic's uniform that no one felt like keeping it clean. Everyone at our VMF seems to have a sense of pride these days."

Credit for this change goes to innovative manager Jim Caviness and the 223 employees at the VMF who maintain and repair the Atlanta Post Office's 1,900 vehicles. But it also belongs to a nationwide program that's bringing visible changes to the facilities that service and repair most of the 118,000 postal-owned vehicles.

The facilities, once dark and dingy, are getting a face-lift inside and out these days. Mechanics who used to be casual about oil and grease stains are reporting to work in fresh uniforms every day. Vehicles now washed and maintained more often are looking better and breaking down less frequently.

One of the best benefits to the new program is an attitude change, according to Robert St. Francis, director of the Office of Fleet Management. "And it's high time, too," he declares. "VMF employees, because they are not as visible to the public, had come to think of pride as something reserved for letter carriers and window clerks and to view themselves as 'a forgotten entity' or 'the people who work in the place out back.' We asked ourselves how this self-defeating image could exist in such an important operation and what we could do to change it. After all, if the vehicles don't move, neither does the mail."

Fortunately, St. Francis and his people at Headquarters weren't alone in their concern. In the past year, venturesome VMF managers around the country had simultaneously begun finding ways to improve their facilities and their employees' self-esteem. Headquarters picked up these ideas, added some others, fused and refined them, and handed them back to the regions in a package called the Model VMF Program.

The program provides consistent operational procedures throughout the Service and recognition for VMFs that meet expected levels of quality. It stresses employee involvement, use of up-to-date tools and clean surroundings. Eventually each region will select two facilities to serve as models for others to emulate. Still in its infancy, the program now boasts only three model offices: Albany, NY, Atlanta, GA, and Gary, IN.

An important facet of the program is the freedom it gives managers to adapt local innovations to the peculiarities of different offices. For example, Fleet Manager Jerry Blanch of Albany eliminated the third tour in his facility and put everyone to work between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. The all daytime schedule not only increased morale by changing employees' life style, it also cut overhead expense and made cooperation easier. Formerly, the day and night crews never got to know each other, Blanch explains, so they were prone to blame everything that went wrong on the other crew. Now that the tours overlap, everyone is bound to meet sometime during the day and they help each other. Blanch, whose employees are responsible for 656 vehicles of various sizes from K-cars to tractor-trailers, operated his own service station before joining the Postal Service 22 years ago as a garageman.

Bill Kurtzner, a vehicle maintenance analyst, is one of the employees at Albany who likes the flexibility the model program has afforded. Kurtzner prepares work orders on vehicles and also performs tune-ups and other jobs when needed. "We have an opportunity to work in everyone else's area," he says. "That helps you understand what the other person is up against and keeps you on your toes." He also appreciates the program's emphasis on safety, up-to-date equipment and training. "We used to spend a lot of time walking back and forth to borrow the only two air wrenches in the shop—now everybody has one. At regular safety meetings, Mr. Blanch also takes some time to tell us what's going on. He makes us feel we're included in the decisions and we respect him because he has been in our shoes."

The other two model facilities could repeat the same story with different characters. Mechanics are enjoying the appreciation they get from carriers and MVS drivers who experience fewer breakdowns.

They're also conscious of the better image a cleaner looking postal fleet is giving the Postal Service, and they value the increased emphasis on training and communications.

Helen Cunningham, a junior mechanic at the Gary VMF, is a

continued

E.T. Wheeler, Roger Wilkes, John Lucckowski and Roland Jones help roll a clean white surface onto the floor at the Columbia, MD, Vehicle Maintenance Facility. The paint job is just part of a program designed to brighten the outlook for VMF employees.

case in point. Cunningham, who recently completed the basic automotive course at the USPS Technical Center in Norman, OK, considers the training a golden opportunity. "We had the most modern engines to work on and were shown every step in the maintenance process to help us learn how to take engines apart for repairs."

Back at the model VMF, Cunningham says she constantly turns to her reference book, to the lead mechanic and to her supervisor for advice. "I always feel free to ask," she says. "It's that kind of place." ■

—Catherine Courtney

Winterizing your car

For tips on winterizing your personal automobile, *Postal Life* consulted the experts—the people who keep our 118,000 postal vehicles rolling from season to season.

Perhaps the best of these experts are three Model Vehicle Maintenance Facility managers, Jerry Blanch of Albany, NY; Jim Caviness of Atlanta, GA; and Cecil Gonzales of Gary, IN. And they all agree that there has been some re-thinking over the years on the subject of winterizing.

For example, popular belief has it that you should drain all the antifreeze solution out of your radiator in the spring, replacing it with water and rust inhibitor, then replacing that with antifreeze before winter's first freeze. "Wasteful and inefficient," says Blanch. "What people don't understand, and their garage mechanics don't bother to explain, is that antifreeze is good for the engine in hot weather too—it keeps it from overheating. In postal vehicles we keep the antifreeze mixture at an acceptable ratio year round." You can do the same, using an inexpensive kit on the market today for periodic checks on your auto's antifreeze-water ratio.

Storing snow tires is another exercise now considered out of date by the Postal Service. The consensus is that regular tires may give a little better mileage but not enough to offset the time, labor costs and space required for changing regular and snow tires twice a year.

But you should take into account that 90 percent of postal vehicles average only 8 to 12 miles per day, and performance requirements for them are quite different than for the average passenger car. In most cases, and particularly if you do highway driving, it is wiser to change snow tires to regular tires for the summer. Your best advice on this is available at your local agency for consumer product safety.

There is general agreement among fleet managers that motor oil properly distributed through the system is the most vital element in any vehicle's upkeep. And again, contrary to popular belief, you don't have to worry about different oil grades for winter and summer if you use a multi-viscosity oil of at least 10-W-40 (10-W-50 is better) and change it when it gets dirty. How do you know when it's time for a change? When you can't see through the oil to your dipstick, trade in the old for the new. And, be sure to carry a quart of the same brand in your trunk, so you'll have it if you need to add more; mixing viscosity is not good for the system. Another must is replacing the filter during each oil change. If you've ever questioned whether the mechanic has given you the new filter you've paid for, there's an easy way to make sure. Next time, just put a squirt of spray paint on the old filter. If the paint is still there when you pick up the car, you have a beef with the service station.

Windshield wipers are something to be handled with care. If ice has formed on your windshield, your first step is to free up the wipers by lifting them gently, then use a scraper and your defroster to clear the windshield. Forcing an iced-up wiper can bend the blades, even break them.

The above suggestions are universal wherever you find icy weather, but some winter problems are peculiar to certain regions.

Gary, IN, is one of those places where salt on the road can cause a rust problem. Manager Cecil Gonzales says, "We practice undercoating and frequent washing as a prevention measure and, as a last resort, refer the corroded vehicle to the body shop."

Here's a final recommendation about winterizing your car from the VMF experts: Give your automobile a thorough going-over before winter sets in. Inspect the brakes, tires, hoses and belts; repair windshield wipers; lubricate the chassis and clean and service the battery. Repair and replace parts where needed. In other words, practice preventive—rather than "breakdown"—maintenance and you'll be ready for the worst that winter can bring. ■

KEEPING POSTED

Winners of the first Postal Life Photo Contest were selected by a panel of judges in October. First-place winners will receive a half-ounce gold medallion minted by the U.S. Treasury, and second- and third-place winners will receive gift certificates of $100 and $75, respectively, for the direct mail order catalog of their choice. Honorable mention photos will be printed in the next issue of Postal Life along with the other winning photographs.

In the black and white category, Michael J. Gunn of Chicago won both first and second place. Third-place winner was Helen Hoff, of Casper, WY, and a photo by Michael Matejka, of Milwaukee, WI, was chosen for honorable mention.

Walter L. Dugan, of Duncanville, TX, won first place in the color photograph category, and Eugene Taylor, of Newhall, CA, was the second-place winner. The third-place award went to C. Howard, of Oakland, CA, and honorable mentions were awarded to photos by Ronald Worley, Indianapolis, IN; Stewart Whisenant, Wilmington, DE; Ruth Ladage, Washcugal, WA; and Linda Russell Wright, Santa Barbara, CA.

First-place winner in the instant shots or snapshot category was Jim Conwall of Buffalo, NY; John W. Holmes, of Azle, TX, won second prize and third prize went to Henry K. Johnson, of Townsend, MA.

The Postal Service and three postal unions have taken the first steps toward developing a process aimed at improving the quality of working life for all employees. Agreements to establish joint committees to define and direct implementation of an employee involvement process were signed by the USPS with the National Association of Letter Carriers and with the National Rural Letter Carriers Association. Following up on their 1981 contractual agreement to establish a joint committee, the National Post Office Mail Handlers Union and the USPS signed a Statement of Principles and Committee Responsibilities.

All three committees are developing guidelines for future use in local joint union-management efforts. The committees look forward to testing these guidelines at some pilot sites in 1983.

A small white plastic gizmo that looks like a circle with legs will soon become as familiar as rubber bands to most postal employees. It will replace the blue breakaway plastic closure that secures the leather strap and hasp assembly on First-Class, Priority and Express Mail pouches. While the blue closures were thrown away after each use, the new ones are reusable.

Drunk drivers killed more than 25,000 people last year, permanently crippled another 125,000 and injured 650,000. The danger of out-of-control people in out-of-control cars will be spotlighted December 12-18 during National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week.

On a brighter note, Postmaster General William F. Bolger recently accepted a national honor on behalf of the Postal Service and its Program for Alcoholic Recovery (PAR). The Association of Labor-Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism named PAR as 1982's outstanding labor-management program for employees who suffer from alcoholism.

PAR was established in 1968 as a pilot program in the San Francisco Post Office. Today it operates in 146 postal facilities and is available to the majority of postal employees. During the last 14 years, some 24,000 employees have participated in the program, 7,000 have successfully completed it and 12,000 remain active in it.

People who invest in America began getting a new deal November 1. That's when the government introduced a formula that pegs the rate of return on Series EE Savings Bonds to money-market rates. If held for five years, the new variable interest rate Series EE Bonds will earn at least 85 percent of the five-year average return on Treasury issues. Should market rates fall, the EE Bonds sold on or after November 1 will still earn 7.5 percent (compounded semiannually) if held five years. The new formula also applies to older Series EE Bonds and U.S Savings Notes. If you hold onto them until November 1987, you'll get the market-based rate or the yield promised earlier, whichever is higher.

Starting next year, we'll be testing a system that will use special postage stamps, stationery and metered postage to replace the "Postage and Fees Paid" indicia currently used on government mail. The Department of Agriculture and U.S. Air Force will take part in a nationwide test of the new system. During the test, the participating agencies will requisition the stamps and postal stationery from designated "stamp distribution offices." The items, which will be produced in a range of denominations, will be "tagged" with phosphorescent ink that will trigger automatic facing-canceling by postal equipment. Ordering, fulfillment and accounting procedures for the postage are being designed to parallel the regular stamp distribution process as much as possible. If it proves successful, the plan would supplant the present system which relies on mail samplings to determine postage costs.

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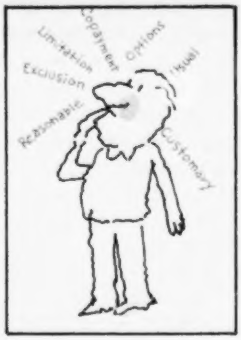
POSTMASTERS: When an employee moves, please remind that person to fill out PS form 1216 (Employee's Current Mailing Address) and to submit it to the personnel office in the post office where he works, making certain the employee's Social Security Number and the office's finance number are included. Do not send change to address to Postal Life.

CONTENTS

4



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2 **WE DELIVER CHRISTMAS WITH SPIRIT!**
This is the time of year when we play Santa to millions of people, and we make it a class act!

4 **THE FAMILY MAN**
Collecting kids is a specialty for CSR Joe DeAngelis and his wife, Annette. At last count they had nine.

6 **AN OVERHAUL FOR OUR VMFS & WINTERIZING YOUR CAR**
USPS garages are opting for a new spit-and-polish look that's translating into a better image for the postal fleet.

11 **TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME**
A famous character in a trench coat has joined us just in time to offer some advice on how to keep our homes safe during the holidays.

12 **WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HEALTH INSURANCE?**
We're paying more for less coverage and the future appears to hold more of the same. But there are ways to defend both our health and our pocketbooks, and now is the time to do it.

15 **KEEPING POSTED**

On our cover: Steve Hill, parcel post carrier, delights customers on his route in Boston's Beacon Hill section by making his deliveries in a Santa Claus suit. Photo by David L. Ryan, courtesy of The Boston Globe.

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